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*Thornthwaite sculp.*

**M<sup>r</sup>. FARREN as SIR CHARLES EASY.**

*Sir Cha. Well, don't be uneasy — I am not angry  
with you now — Come and kiss me.*

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THE  
CARELESS HUSBAND,

A  
COMEDY,

BY COLLEY CIBBER, Esq.

ADAPTED FOR  
THEATRICAL REPRESENTATION,

AS PERFORMED AT THE  
THEATRES-ROYAL,  
DRURY-LANE AND COVENT-GARDEN.

REGULATED FROM THE PROMPT-BOOKS,  
*By Permission of the Managers.*

*"The Lines distinguished by inverted Commas, are omitted in the Representation."*

LONDON:

*Printed for the Proprietors, under the Direction of*  
JOHN BELL, British Library, STRAND,  
Bookseller to His Royal Highness the PRINCE of WALES.

M DCC XCI.



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TO  
THE MOST ILLUSTRIOUS  
JOHN,  
DUKE OF ARGYLE.

---

*THIS play, at last, through many difficulties, has made way to throw itself at your Grace's feet: and considering what well-meant attempts were made to intercept it in its course to so great an honour, I have had reason not to think it entirely successful, till (where my ambition always designed it) I found it safe in your protection: which when several means had failed of making it less worthy of, the spleen ended with the old good-nature that was offered to my first play, viz. that it was none of my own; but that's a praise I have indeed some reason to be proud of, since your Grace, from evincing circumstances, is able to divide the malice from the compliment.*

*The best critics have long and justly complained, that the coarseness of most characters in our late comedies, have been unfit entertainments for people of quality, especially the ladies: and therefore I was long in hopes that some able pen (whose expectations did not hang upon the profits of success) would generously attempt to reform the town into a better taste*

than the world generally allows them: but nothing of that kind having lately appeared, that would give me an opportunity of being wise at another's expence, I found it impossible any longer to resist the secret temptation of my vanity, and so even struck the first blow myself: and the event has now convinced me, that whoever sticks closely to nature, can't easily write above the understanding of the galleries, though at the same time he may possibly deserve applause of the boxes.

This play, before its trial on the stage, was examined by several people of quality, that came into your Grace's opinion of its being a just, a proper, and diverting attempt in comedy; but few of them carried the compliment beyond their private approbation: for when I was wishing for a little farther hope, they stopped short of your Grace's penetration, and only kindly wished me what they seemed to fear, and you assured me of, a general success.

But your Grace has been pleased, not only to encourage me with your judgment; but have likewise, by your favourable influence in the bounties that were raised for me the third and sixth day, defended me against any hazards of an entire disappointment from so bold an undertaking: and therefore, whatever the world may think of me, as one they call a poet, yet I am confident, as your Grace understands me, I shall not want your belief, when I assure you, that this dedication is the result of a profound ac-

knowledge, an artless inclination, proudly glad  
and grateful.

*And if the dialogue of the following scenes flows  
with more easy turn of thought and spirit, than what  
I have usually produced; I shall not yet blame some  
people for saying 'tis not my own, unless they knew  
at the same time I owe most of it to the many stolen  
observations I have made from your Grace's manner  
of conversing.*

*And if ever the influence of your Grace's more  
shining qualities should persuade me to attempt a  
tragedy, I shall then, with the same freedom, borrow  
all the ornamental virtues of my hero, where now  
I only am indebted for part of the fine gentleman.  
Greatness of birth and mind, sweetness of temper,  
flowing from the fixt and native principles of courage  
and of honour, are beauties that I reserve for a far-  
ther opportunity of expressing the zeal and gratitude  
of.*

*My Lord,*

*Your Grace's most obedient,*

*And most obliged humble servant,*

COLLEY CIBBER.

Dec. 15, 1704.



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THE  
*CARELESS HUSBAND.*

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THIS comedy, as it would do honour to the pen of any modern, will establish the fame of COLLEY CIBBER.

It abounds in correct delineations of polished life, and many shrewd sentiments of character. There is a delicacy in the recovery of the libertine, which every reader or spectator feels and receives as a lesson by which the heart may become the better.

“Your GENTLENESS shall move,  
“More than your FORCE move us to gentleness.”

For so, in the language of Shakspeare, it might be said to every reformer whose discipline seems harsh and unpalatable.

Of CIBBER, every reader, except the dramatic, will no doubt be sufficiently ready to join in the splenetic abuse, by which a good poet has marked him for derision. Time not in this case, as in most others, will find its rectifying power applied in vain. The idle injustice of the satirist will remain from the predo-



minance of verse, and thus demonstrate that the poet and the priest, over and above their Roman designation by the same name, should, if possible, participate their qualities, that *humanity* and *rhime* might go together, and the glitter of *verse* be never abused to embalm *injustice*.

In order that, as far as depends upon the present writer, the indecent acrimony of POPE may be defeated, the following extracts are made from a manly appeal of CIBBER to his puny, yet venomous enemy.

After an explicit challenge to prove that he ever was otherwise than Mr. POPE's admirer, and remarking upon the miserable excuse for his attacks—the DULNESS of those he assailed—he goes on :

“ No, sure, dulness can be no vice or crime, or is  
“ at worst but a misfortune, and you ought no more  
“ to censure or revile a man for it, than for his being  
“ blind or lame; the cruelty or injustice will be evidently equal either way. But, if you please, I will  
“ wave this part of my argument, and for once take  
“ no advantage of it—but will suppose dulness to be  
“ actually criminal, and then will leave it to your own  
“ conscience to declare, whether you really think I  
“ am generally so guilty of it as to deserve the name  
“ of the dull fellow you make of me. Now, if the  
“ reader will call upon my conscience to speak upon  
“ the question, I do from my heart solemnly declare,

“that I don’t believe you *do* think so of me. This, “I grant, may be vanity in me to say: but if what I “believe is true, what a slovenly conscience do you “shew your face with.

“Now, sir, as for my scurrility, whenever a proof “can be produced, that I have been guilty of it to “you, or any one man living, I will shamefully re- “say all I have said, and confess I have deserved the “various names you have called me.”

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There can be no doubt that the preceding is the language of truth. Indeed the whole letter is as convincing as day light. It was printed by LEWIS of Russel-street, date 1742.

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## PROLOGUE.

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*OF all the various vices of the age,  
And shoals of fools expos'd upon the stage,  
How few are lasht that call for satire's rage!  
What can you think to see our plays so full  
Of madmen, coxcombs, and the driveling fool?  
Of cits, of sharpers, rakes, and roaring bullies,  
Of cheats, of cuckolds, aldermen and cullies?  
Wou'd not one swear, 'twere taken for a rule,  
That satire's rod in the dramatic school,  
Was only meant for the incorrigible fool?  
As if too vice and folly were confin'd  
To the vile scum alone of human kind.  
Creatures a muse shou'd scorn; such abject trash  
Deserves not satire's, but the hangman's lash.  
Wretches so far shout out from sense of shame,  
Newgate or Bedlam only should reclaim;  
For satire ne'er was meant to make wild monsters tame.  
No, Sirs. —————*

*We rather think the persons fit for plays,  
Are they whose birth and education says  
They've every help that should improve mankind,  
Yet still live slaves to a vile tainted mind;*

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*Such as in wit are often seen t'abound,  
And yet have some weak part, where folly's found:  
For follies sprout like weeds, highest in fruitful ground.  
And 'tis observ'd, the garden of the mind  
To no infestive weed's so much inclin'd,  
As the rank pride that some from affectation find.  
A folly too well known to make its court  
With most success among the better sort.  
Such are the persons we to-day provide,  
And nature's fools for once are laid aside.  
This is the ground, on which our play we build;  
But in the structure must to judgment yield:  
And where the poet fails in art, or care,  
We beg your wonted mercy to the player.*

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Dramatis Personae.

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Men.

Lord MORRELOVE	"	"	"	"	-	Mr. Wroughton.
Lord FOPPINGTON	"	"	"	"	"	Mr. Dodd.
Sir CHARLES EASY	"	"	"	"	"	Mr. Kemble.

## Women.

Lady BETTY MODISH - - - - Miss Farren.  
 Lady EASY - - - - Mrs. Powell.  
 Lady GRAVEAIRS - - - - Mrs. Ward.  
 Mrs. EDGING, *woman to Lady Easy* - - Mrs. Pope.

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Met.

Lord MORELOVE	-	-	-	-	-	Mr. Pope.
Lord FOPPINGTON	-	-	-	-	-	Mr. Lewis.
Sir CHARLES EASY	-	-	-	-	-	Mr. Farren.
Servant	-	-	-	-	-	Mr. Evatt.

**Women:**

Lady BETTY MODISH	-	-	-	Miss Chapman.
Lady EASY	-	-	-	Mrs. Pope.
Lady GRAVEAIRS	-	-	-	Mrs. Bernard.
Mrs. EDGING, <i>woman to Lady Easy</i>	-	-	-	Mrs. Mattocks.

SCENE, Windsor.





## THE CARELESS HUSBAND.

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### ACT I. SCENE I.

*Sir CHARLES EASY's Lodgings. Enter Lady EASY  
alone.*

*Lady Easy.*

WAS ever woman's spirit, by an injurious husband, broke like mine? A vile, licentious man! must he bring home his follies too? Wrong me with my very servant! O! how tedious a relief is patience! and yet in my condition 'tis the only remedy: for to reproach him with my wrongs, is taking on myself the means of a redress, bidding defiance to his falsehood, and naturally but provokes him to undo me. The uneasy thought of my continual jealousy may teize him to a fixt aversion; and hitherto, though he neglects, I cannot think he hates me.—It must be so: since I want power to please him, he never shall upbraid me with an attempt of making him uneasy—My eyes and tongue shall yet be blind and silent to

my wrongs; nor would I have him think my virtue could suspect him, till by some gross, apparent proof of his misdoing, he forces me to see—and to forgive it.

*Enter EDGING hastily.*

*Edg.* O madam!

*L. Easy.* What's the matter?

*Edg.* I have the strangest thing to shew your ladyship—such a discovery——

*L. Easy.* You are resolved to make it without much ceremony, I find. What's the business, pray?

*Edg.* The business, madam, I have not patience to tell you; I am out of breath at the very thoughts on't; I shall not be able to speak this half hour.

*L. Easy.* Not to the purpose, I believe! but methinks you talk impertinently with a great deal of ease.

*Edg.* Nay, madam, perhaps not so impertinent as your ladyship thinks; there is that will speak to the purpose, I am sure—A base man— [*Gives a letter.*]

*L. Easy.* What is this? An open letter! Whence comes it?

*Edg.* Nay, read it, madam, you will soon guess—If these are the tricks of husbands, keep me a maid still, say I.

*L. Easy.* [*Looking on the superscription.*] To Sir Charles Easy! Ha! Too well I know this hateful hand.—O my heart: but I must veil my jealousy, which 'tis not fit this creature should suppose I am

acquainted with. [*Aside.*] This direction is to your master, how came you by it?

*Edg.* Why, madam, as my master was lying down, after he came in from hunting, he sent me into his dressing-room to fetch his snuff-box out of his waist-coat-pocket, and so as I was searching for the box, madam, there I found this wicked letter from a mistress; which I had no sooner read, but, I declare it, my very blood rose at him again; methought I could have torn him and her to pieces.

*L. Easy.* Intolerable! This odious thing's jealous of him herself, and wants me to join with her in a revenge upon him—Sure I am fallen, indeed! But 'twere to make me lower yet, to let her think I understand her. [*Aside.*]

*Edg.* Nay, pray, madam, read it, you will be out of patience at it.

*L. Easy.* You are bold, mistress; has my indulgence, or your master's good humour, flattered you into the assurance of reading his letters; a liberty I never gave myself—Here—lay it where you had it immediately—should he know of your sauciness, 'twould not be my favour could protect you.

[*Exit L. Easy.*]

*Edg.* Your favour! marry come up! sure I don't depend upon your favour!—It's not come to that, I hope.—Poor creature—don't you think I am my master's mistress for nothing—You shall find, madam, I won't be snapt up as I have been—Not but it vexes me to think she should not be as uneasy as I. I am

sure he is a base man to me, and I could cry my eyes out that she should not think him as bad to her every jot. If I am wronged, sure she may very well expect it, that is but his wife—A conceited thing—she need not be so easy, neither—I am as handsome as she, I hope—Here's my master—I'll try whether I am to be huff'd by her or no. [*Walks behind.*]

*Enter Sir CHARLES EASY.*

*Sir Cha.* So! The day is come again!—Life but rises to another stage, and the same dull journey is before us.—How like children do we judge of happiness! When I was stinted in my fortune, almost every thing was a pleasure to me, because most things then being out of my reach, I had always the pleasure of hoping for them; now fortune's in my hand, she is as insipid as an old acquaintance—It is mighty silly faith.—Just the same thing by my wife, too; I am told she is extremely handsome—nay, and have heard a great many people say she is certainly the best woman in the world—Why, I don't know but she may, yet I could never find that her person or good qualities gave me any concern—In my eye, the woman has no more charms than my mother.

*Edg.* Hum!—he takes no notice of me yet—I'll let him see I can take as little notice of him. [*She walks by him gravely, he turns her about and holds her, she struggles.*] Pray, sir!

*Sir Cha.* A pretty pert air, that—I'll humour it—

What's the matter, child? Are not you well? Kiss me, hussy.

*Edg.* No, the deuce fetch me if I do.

*Sir Cha.* Has any thing put thee out of humour, love?

*Edg.* No, sir, 'tis not worth my being out of humour at—tho' if ever you have any thing to say to me again, I'll be burned.

*Sir Cha.* Somebody has belied me to thee.

*Edg.* No, sir, 'tis you have belied yourself to me—Did not I ask you, when you first made a fool of me, if you would be always constant to me; and did not you say, I might be sure you would? And here, instead of that, you are going on in your old intrigue with my Lady Graveairs.—

*Sir Cha.* So——

*Edg.* Beside, don't you suffer my lady to huff me every day as if I were her dog, or had no more concern with you—I declare I won't bear it, and she shan't think to huff me—for aught I know I am as agreeable as she: and tho' she dares not take any notice of your baseness to her, you shan't think to use me so—and so pray take your nasty letter—I know the hand well enough—for my part I won't stay in the family to be abused at this rate: I that have refused lords and dukes for your sake; I'd have you to know, sir, I have had as many blue and green ribbons after me, for aught I know, as would have made me a falbala apron.



*Sir Cha.* My Lady Graveairs! my nasty letter! and I won't stay in the family! Death!—I'm in a pretty condition!—What an unlimited privilege has this jade got from being a whore?

*Edg.* I suppose, sir, you think to use every body as you do your wife.

*Sir Cha.* My wife, hah! Come hither, Mrs. Edging; hark you, drab. [*Seizing her by the shoulder.*

*Edg.* Oh!

*Sir Cha.* When you speak of my wife, you are to say your lady, and you are never to speak of your lady to me in any regard of her being my wife—for look you, child, you are not her strumpet, but mine, therefore I only give you leave to be saucy with me.—In the next place, you are never to suppose there is any such person as my Lady Graveairs; and lastly, my pretty one, how came you by this letter?

*Edg.* It's no matter, perhaps.

*Sir Cha.* Aye, but if you should not tell me quickly, how are you sure I won't take a great piece of flesh out of your shoulder?—My dear. [*Shakes her,*

*Edg.* O lud! O lud! I will tell you, sir,

*Sir Cha.* Quickly then——

*Edg.* Oh! I took it out of your pocket, sir.

*Sir Cha.* When?

*Edg.* Oh! this morning, when you sent me for your snuff-box.

*Sir Cha.* And your ladyship's pretty curiosity has looked it over, I presume—ha— [*Shakes her again,*



*Edg.* O lud! dear sir, don't be angry—indeed I'll never touch one again.

*Sir Cha.* I don't believe you will, and I'll tell you how you shall be sure you never will.

*Edg.* Yes, sir.

*Sir Cha.* By stedfastly believing that the next time you offer it, you will have your pretty white neck twisted behind you.

*Edg.* Yes, sir.

[*Curt'sying,*

*Sir Cha.* And you will be sure to remember every thing I have said to you?

*Edg.* Yes, sir.

*Sir Cha.* And now, child, I was not angry with your person, but your follies; which, since I find you are a little sensible of—don't be wholly discouraged—for I believe I—I shall have occasion for you again——

*Edg.* Yes, sir.

*Sir Cha.* In the mean time, let me hear no more of your lady, child.

*Edg.* No, sir.

*Sir Cha.* Here she comes: begone.

*Edg.* Yes, sir—Oh! I was never so frightened in my life.

[*Exit.*

*Sir Cha.* So! good discipline makes good soldiers—It often puzzles me to think, from my own carelessness, and my wife's continual good humour, whether she really knows any thing of the strength of my forces—I'll sift her a little.

*Enter Lady EASY.*

My dear, how do you do? You are dressed very early to-day: are you going out?

*L. Easy.* Only to church, my dear.

*Sir Cha.* Is it so late then?

*L. Easy.* The bell has just rung.

*Sir Cha.* Well, child, how does Windsor air agree with you? Do you find yourself any better yet? or have you a mind to go to London again?

*L. Easy.* No, indeed, my dear; the air is so very pleasant, that if it were a place of less company, I could be content to end my days here.

*Sir Cha.* Pr'ythee, my dear, what sort of company would most please you?

*L. Easy.* When business would permit it, yours; and in your absence a sincere friend, that were truly happy in an honest husband, to sit a cheerful hour, and talk in mutual praise of our condition.

*Sir Cha.* Are you then really very happy, my dear?

*L. Easy.* Why should you question it?

*[Smiling on him.]*

*Sir Cha.* Because I fancy I am not so good to you as I should be.

*L. Easy.* Pshaw.

*Sir Cha.* Nay, the deuce take me if I don't really confess myself so bad, that I have often wondered how any woman of your sense, rank, and person, could think it worth her while to have so many useless good qualities.

*L. Easy.* Fie, my dear.

*Sir Cha.* By my soul, I am serious.

*L. Easy.* I cannot boast of my good qualities, nor if I could, do I believe you think them useless.

*Sir Cha.* Nay, I submit to you—Don't you find them so? Do you perceive that I am one tittle the better husband for your being so good a wife?

*L. Easy.* Pshaw! you jest with me.

*Sir Cha.* Upon my life I don't—Tell me truly, was you never jealous of me?

*L. Easy.* Did I ever give you any sign of it?

*Sir Cha.* Um—that's true—but do you really think I never gave you occasion?

*L. Easy.* That's an odd question—but suppose you had?

*Sir Cha.* Why then, what good has your virtue done you, since all the good qualities of it could not keep me to yourself?

*L. Easy.* What occasion have you given me to suppose I have not kept you to myself?

*Sir Ch.* I given you occasion—Fie! my dear—you may be sure—I—look you, that is not the thing, but still a—(death! what a blunder have I made?)—a—still, I say, madam, you shan't make me believe you have never been jealous of me; not that you ever had any real cause, but I know women of your principles have more pride than those that have no principles at all; and where there is pride, there must be some jealousy—so that if you are jealous; my dear, you know you wrong me, and—

*L. Easy.* Why then, upon my word, my dear, I don't know that ever I wronged you that way in my life.

*Sir Cha.* But suppose I had given a real cause to be jealous, how would you do then?

*L. Easy.* It must be a very substantial one that makes me jealous.

*Sir Cha.* Say it were a substantial one; suppose now I were well with a woman of your own acquaintance, that, under pretence of frequent visits to you, should only come to carry on an affair with me—suppose now my Lady Graveairs and I were great?

*L. Easy.* Would I could not suppose it. [*Aside.*]

*Sir Cha.* If I come off here I believe I am pretty safe. [*Aside.*—Suppose, I say, my lady and I were so very familiar, that not only yourself, but half the town should see it?

*L. Easy.* Then I should cry myself sick in some dark closet, and forget my tears when you spoke kindly to me.

*Sir Cha.* The most convenient piece of virtue sure that ever wife was mistress of. [*Aside.*]

*L. Easy.* But pray, my dear, did you ever think that I had any ill thoughts of my Lady Graveairs?

*Sir Cha.* O fie! child; only you know she and I used to be a little free sometimes, so I had a mind to see if you thought there was any harm in it; but since I find you very easy, I think myself obliged to tell you, that upon my soul, my dear, I have so little regard to her person, that the deuce take me,

if I would not as soon have an affair with thy woman.

*L. Easy.* Indeed, my dear, I should as soon suspect you with one as t'other.

*Sir Cha.* Poor dear—should'st thou—give me a kiss.

*L. Easy.* Pahaw! you don't care to kiss me.

*Sir Cha.* By my soul, I do——I wish I may die, if I don't think you a very fine woman.

*L. Easy.* I only wish you would think me a good wife. [*Kisses her.*] But pray, my dear, what has made you so strangely inquisitive?

*Sir Cha.* Inquisitive—Why—a—I don't know, one is always saying one foolish thing or another—Toll le roll. [*Sings and talks.*] My dear, what! are we never to have any ball here! Toll le roll. I fancy I could recover my dancing again, if I would but practise. Toll loll loll!

*L. Easy.* This excess of carelessness to me excuses half his vices. If I can make him once think seriously—Time yet may be my friend.

*Enter a Servant.*

*Serv.* Sir, Lord Morelove gives his service——

*Sir Cha.* Lord Morelove? where is he?

*Serv.* At the Chocolate-house; he called me to him as I went by, and bid me tell your honour he'll wait upon you presently.

*L. Easy.* I thought you had not expected him here again this season, my dear.



*Sir Cha.* I thought so too, but you see there's no depending upon the resolution of a man that's in love.

*L. Easy.* Is there a chair?

*Serv.* Yes, madam.

[*Exit Servant.*]

*L. Easy.* I suppose Lady Betty Modish has drawn him hither.

*Sir Cha.* Aye, poor soul, for all his bravery, I am afraid so.

*L. Easy.* Well, my dear, I ha'nt time to ask my lord how he does now; you'll excuse me to him, but I hope you'll make him dine with us.

*Sir Cha.* I'll ask him. If you see Lady Betty at prayers, make her dine too, but don't take any notice of my lord's being in town.

*L. Easy.* Very well! if I should not meet her there, I'll call at her lodgings.

*Sir Cha.* Do so.

*L. Easy.* My dear, your servant. [*Exit L. Easy.*]

*Sir Cha.* My dear, I'm yours.—Well! one way or other this woman will certainly bring about her business with me at last; for though she cannot make me happy in her own person, she lets me be so intolerably easy with the women that can, that she has at least brought me into a fair way of being as weary of them too.

*Enter Servant and Lord MORELOVE.*

*Serv.* Sir, my lord's come.

*L. Mor.* Dear Charles!



*Sir Cha.* My dear lord! this is an happiness undreamt of; I little thought to have seen you at Windsor again this season! I concluded, of course, that books and solitude had secured you 'till winter.

*L. Mor.* Nay, I did not think of coming myself, but I found myself not very well in London, so I thought—a little hunting, and this air——

*Sir Cha.* Ha! ha! ha!

*L. Mor.* What do you laugh at?

*Sir Cha.* Only because you should not go on with your story: if you did but see how silly a man fumbles for an excuse, when he is a little ashamed of being in love, you would not wonder what I laugh at; ha! ha! ha!

*L. Mor.* Thou art a very happy fellow——nothing touches thee——always easy——Then you conclude I follow Lady Betty again.

*Sir Cha.* Yes, faith do I: and, to make you easy, my lord, I cannot see why a man that can ride fifty miles after a poor stag, should be ashamed of running twenty in chase of a fine woman, that, in all probability, will show him so much the better sport too.

[Embracing.]

*L. Mor.* Dear Charles, don't flatter my distemper; I own I still follow her: do you think her charms have power to excuse me to the world?

*Sir Cha.* Aye! aye! a fine woman's an excuse for any thing, "and the scandal of our being in jest, is a jest itself;" we are all forced to be their fools, before we can be their favourites.

*L. Mor.* You are willing to give me hope; but I can't believe she has the least degree of inclination for me.

*Sir Cha.* I don't know that—I am sure her pride likes you, and that's generally your fine ladies darling passion.

*L. Mor.* Do you suppose if I could grow indifferent, it would touch her?

*Sir Cha.* Sting her to the heart—Will you take my advice?

*L. Mor.* I have no relief but that. Had I not thee now and then to talk an hour, my life were insupportable.

*Sir Cha.* I am sorry for that, my lord;—but mind what I say to you—but hold, first let me know the particulars of your late quarrel with her.

*L. Mor.* Why,—about three weeks ago, when I was last here at Windsor, she had for some days treated me with a little more reserve, and another with more freedom than I found myself easy at.

*Sir Cha.* Who was that other?

*L. Mor.* One of my Lord Foppington's gang—“the pert coxcomb that's just come to a small estate and a great periwig”—he that sings himself among the women—What do you call him—He won't speak to a commoner when a lord is in company—“you always see him with a cane dangling at his button, his breast open, no gloves, one eye tucked under his hat, and a tooth-pick”——Startup, that's his name.

*Sir Cha.* O! I have met him in a visit—but pray go on.

*L. Mor.* So, disputing with her about the conduct of women, I took the liberty to tell her how far I thought she erred in hers; she told me I was rude, and that she would never believe any man could love a woman that thought her in the wrong in any thing she had a mind to, at least if he dared to tell her so—This provoked me into her whole character, with so much spirit and civil malice, as I have seen her bestow upon a woman of true beauty, when the men first toasted her; so in the middle of my wisdom, she told me, she desired to be alone, that I would take my odious proud heart along with me, and trouble her no more—I—bowed very low, and as I left the room, vowed I never would, and that my proud heart should never be humbled by the outside of a fine woman—About an hour after, I whipped into my chaise for London, and have never seen her since.

*Sir Cha.* Very well, and how did you find your proud heart by that time you got to Hounslow?

*L. Mor.* I am almost ashamed to tell you—I found her so much in the right, that I cursed my pride for contradicting her at all, and began to think, according to her maxim, that no woman could be in the wrong to a man that she had in her power.

*Sir Cha.* Ha! ha! Well, I'll tell you what you shall do. You can see her without trembling, I hope.

*L. Mor.* Not if she receives me well.

*Sir Cha.* If she receives you well, you will have no occasion for what I am going to say to you—first you shall dine with her.

*L. Mor.* How! where! when!

*Sir Cha.* Here! here! at two o'clock.

*L. Mor.* Dear Charles!

*Sir Cha.* My wife is gone to invite her; when you see her first, be neither too humble nor too stubborn; let her see, by the ease in your behaviour, you are still pleased in being near her, while she is upon reasonable terms with you. This will either open the door of an *eclaircissement*, or quite shut it against you—and if she is still resolved to keep you out—

*L. Mor.* Nay, if she insults me, then, perhaps, I may recover pride enough to rally her by an over-acted submission.

*Sir Cha.* Why, you improve, my lord: this is the very thing I was going to propose to you.

*L. Mor.* Was it, faith! hark you, dare you stand by me?

*Sir Cha.* Dare I! aye, to my last drop of assurance, against all the insolent airs of the proudest beauty in Christendom.

*L. Mor.* Nay, then defiance to her—We two—Thou hast inspired me—I find myself as valiant as a flattered coward.

*Sir Cha.* Courage, my lord—I'll warrant we beat her.

*L. Mor.* My blood stirs at the very thought on't: I long to be engaged.

*Sir Cha.* She will certainly give ground, when she once sees you are thoroughly provoked.

*L. Mor.* Dear Charles, thou art a friend indeed.

*Enter a Servant.*

*Serv.* Sir, my Lord Foppington gives his service, and if your honour's at leisure, he'll wait on you as soon as he is dressed.

*L. Mor.* Lord Foppington! Is he in town?

*Sir Cha.* Yes,—I heard last night he was come. Give my service to his lordship, and tell him I should be glad he will do me the honour of his company here at dinner. [*Exit Serv.*] We may have occasion for him in our design upon Lady Betty.

*L. Mor.* What use can we make of him?

*Sir Cha.* We'll see when he comes; at least there is no danger in him; but I suppose you know he is your rival.

*L. Mor.* Pshaw! a coxcomb.

*Sir Cha.* Nay, don't despise him neither—he is able to give you advice; for though he is in love with the same woman, yet to him she has not charms enough to give a minute's pain.

*L. Mor.* Pr'ythee, what sense has he of love?

*Sir Cha.* Faith very near as much as a man of sense ought to have; I grant you he knows not how to value a woman truly deserving, but he has a pretty just esteem for most ladies about town.

*L. Mor.* That he follows, I grant you—for he seldom visits any of extraordinary reputation.



*Sir Cha.* Have a care, I have seen him at Lady Betty Modish's.

*L. Mor.* To be laughed at.

*Sir Cha.* Don't be too confident of that; the women now begin to laugh with him, not at him: for he really sometimes rallies his own humour with so much ease and pleasantry, that a great many women begin to think he has no follies at all, and those he has, have been as much owing to his youth, and a great estate, as want of natural wit: 'tis true, he often is a bubble to his pleasures, but he has always been wisely vain enough to keep himself from being too much the ladies' humble servant in love.

*L. Mor.* There, indeed, I almost envy him.

*Sir Cha.* The easiness of his opinion upon the sex, will go near to pique you—We must have him.

*L. Mor.* As you please—but what shall we do with ourselves till dinner?

*Sir Cha.* What think you of a party at picquet?

*L. Mor.* O! you are too hard for me.

*Sir Cha.* Fie! fie! when you play with his Grace?

*L. Mor.* Upon my honour, he gives me three points.

*Sir Cha.* Does he? Why then you shall give me but two—Here, fellow, get cards. *Allons.* [*Exeunt.*]

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ACT II. SCENE I.

*Lady BETTY MODISH's Lodgings. Enter Lady BETTY, and Lady EASY, meeting.*

*Lady Betty.*

OH, my dear! I am overjoyed to see you! I am strangely happy to-day; I have just received my new scarf from London, and you are most critically come to give me your opinion of it.

*L. Easy.* Oh, your servant, madam, I am a very indifferent judge, you know. What is it with sleeves?

*L. Betty.* Oh, 'tis impossible to tell you what it is! — 'Tis all extravagance both in mode and fancy, my dear. I believe there's six thousand yards of edging in it — Then such an enchanting slope from the elbow — something so new, so lively, so noble, so coquette and charming — but you shall see it, my dear —

*L. Easy.* Indeed, I won't, my dear; I am resolved to mortify you for being so wrongfully fond of a trifle.

*L. Betty.* Nay, now, my dear, you are ill-natured.

*L. Easy.* Why, truly, I'm half angry to see a woman of your sense, so warmly concerned in the care of her outside; for when we have taken our best pains about it, 'tis the beauty of the mind alone that gives us lasting virtue.

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*L. Betty.* Ah, my dear! my dear! you have been a married woman to a fine purpose indeed, that know so little of the taste of mankind. Take my word, a new fashion upon a fine woman, is often a greater proof of her value, than you are aware of.

*L. Easy.* That I can't comprehend, for you see among the men, nothing's more ridiculous than a new fashion. Those of the first sense are always the last that come into 'em.

*L. Betty.* That is, because the only merit of a man is his sense; but doubtless the greatest value of a woman is her beauty; an homely woman at the head of a fashion, would not be allowed in it by the men, and consequently not followed by the women: so that to be successful in one's fancy, is an evident sign of one's being admired, and I always take admiration for the best proof of beauty, and beauty certainly is the source of power, as power in all creatures is the height of happiness.

*L. Easy.* At this rate you would rather be thought beautiful than good.

*L. Betty.* As I had rather command than obey: the wisest homely woman can't make a man of sense of a fool, but the veriest fool of a beauty shall make an ass of a statesman; so that, in short, I can't see a woman of spirit has any business in this world but to dress—and make the men like her.

*L. Easy.* Do you suppose this is a principle the men of sense will admire you for?

*L. Betty.* I do suppose, that when I suffer any man to like my person, he shan't dare to find fault with my principle.

*L. Easy.* But men of sense are not so easily humbled.

*L. Betty.* The easiest of any; one has ten thousand times the trouble with a coxcomb.

*L. Easy.* Nay, that may be; for I have seen you throw away more good humour, in hopes of *tendresse* from my Lord Foppington, who loves all women alike, than would have made my Lord Morelove perfectly happy, who loves only you.

*L. Betty.* The men of sense, my dear, make the best fools in the world: their sincerity and good breeding throws them so entirely into one's power, and gives one such an agreeable thirst of using them ill, to shew that power—'tis impossible not to quench it.

*L. Easy.* But, methinks, my Lord Morelove's manner to you might move any woman to a kinder sense of his merit.

*L. Betty.* Aye, but would it not be hard, my dear, for a poor weak woman to have a man of his quality and reputation in her power, and not to let the world see him there? Would any creature sit new dressed all day in her closet? Could you bear to have a sweet-fancy'd suit, and never shew it at the play, or the drawing-room?

*L. Easy.* But one would not ride in's, methinks, or harass it out, when there's no occasion.

*L. Betty.* Pooh! my Lord Morelove's a mere Indian damask, one can't wear him out; o' my conscience I must give him to my woman at last; I begin to be known by him: had not I best leave him off, my dear? for, poor soul, I believe I have a little fretted him of late.

*L. Easy.* Now 'tis to me amazing, how a man of his spirit can bear to be used like a dog for four or five years together—but nothing's a wonder in love; yet pray when you found you could not like him at first, why did you ever encourage him?

*L. Betty.* Why, what would you have one do? for my part, I could no more choose a man by my eye, than a shoe; one must draw them on a little, to see if they are right to one's foot.

*L. Easy.* But I'd no more fool on with a man I could not like, than I'd wear a shoe that pinched me.

*L. Betty.* Aye, but then a poor wretch tells one, he'll widen 'em, or do any thing, and is so civil and silly, that one does not know how to turn such a trifle, as a pair of shoes, or an heart, upon a fellow's hands again.

*L. Easy.* Well; I confess you are very happily distinguished among most women of fortune, to have a man of my Lord Morelove's sense and quality so long and honourably in love with you; for now-a-days one hardly ever hears of such a thing as a man of quality in love with the woman he would marry. To be in love now, is only to have a design upon a woman, a modish way of declaring war against her vir-



ture, which they generally attack first, by toasting up her vanity.

*L. Betty.* Aye, but the world knows, that is not the case between my lord and me.

*L. Easy.* Therefore I think you happy.

*L. Betty.* Now I don't see it; I'll swear I'm better pleased to know there are a great many foolish fellows of quality that take occasion to toast me frequently.

*L. Easy.* I vow I shou'd not thank any gentleman for toasting me, and I have often wondered how a woman of your spirit could bear a great many other freedoms I have seen some men take with you.

*L. Betty.* As how, my dear! Come, pr'ythee, be free with me, for you must know, I love dearly to hear my faults—Who is't you have observ'd to be too free with me?

*L. Easy.* Why, there's my Lord Foppington; could any woman but you bear to see him with a respectful flier stare full in her face, draw up his breath, and cry—Gad, you're handsome?

*L. Betty.* My dear, fine fruit will have flies about it; but, poor things, they do it no harm: for if you observe, people are generally most apt to choose that the flies have been busy with, ha, ha, ha!

*L. Easy.* Thou art a strange giddy creature.

*L. Betty.* That may be from so much circulation of thought, my dear."

*L. Easy.* But my Lord Foppington's married, and

*L. Betty.* Pooh! my Lord Morelove's a mere Indian damask, one can't wear him out; o' my conscience I must give him to my woman at last; I begin to be known by him: had not I best leave him off, my dear? for, poor soul, I believe I have a little fretted him of late.

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*L. Easy.* Thou art a strange giddy creature.

*L. Betty.* That may be from so much circulation  
“of thought, my dear.”

*L. Easy.* But my Lord Foppington's married, and

one would not fool with him, for his lady's sake; it may make her uneasy, and——

*L. Betty.* Poor creature, her pride indeed makes her carry it off without taking any notice of it to me; tho' I know she hates me in her heart, and I can't endure malicious people, so I used to dine with her once a week, purely to give her disorder; if you had but seen when my lord and I fooled a little, the creature looked so ugly.

*L. Easy.* But I should not think my reputation safe; my Lord Foppington's a man that talks often of his amours, but seldom speaks of favours that are refused him.

*L. Betty.* Pshaw! will any thing a man says make a woman less agreeable? Will his talking spoil one's complexion, or put one's hair out of order?—and for reputation, look you, my dear, take it for a rule, that as amongst the lower rank of people, no woman wants beauty that has fortune; so among people of fortune, no woman wants virtue that has beauty: but an estate and beauty join'd, are of an unlimited, nay, a power pontifical, make one not only absolute, but infallible—A fine woman's never in the wrong, or, if we were, 'tis not the strength of a poor creature's reason that can unfetter him.—Oh, how I love to hear a wretch curse himself for loving on, or now and then coming out with a——

*Yet for the plague of human race,  
This devil has an angel's face.*

*L. Easy.* At this rate, I don't see you allow reputation to be at all essential to a fine woman.

*L. Betty.* Just as much as honour to a great man. "Power is always above scandal. Don't you hear people say the king of France owes most of his conquests to breaking his word, and would not the confederates have a fine time on't, if they were only to go to war with reproaches." Indeed, my dear, that jewel reputation is a very fanciful business! one shall not see an homely creature in town, but wears it in her mouth as monstrously as the Indians do bobs at their lips, and it really becomes them just alike.

*L. Easy.* Have a care, my dear, of trusting too far to power alone: for nothing is more ridiculous than the fall of pride; and woman's pride at best may be suspected to be more a distrust, than a real contempt of mankind: for when we have said all we can, a deserving husband is certainly our best happiness; and I don't question but my Lord Morelove's merit, in a little time, will make you think so too; for whatever airs you give yourself to the world, I'm sure your heart don't want good-nature.

*L. Betty.* You are mistaken, I am very ill-natured, tho' your good humour won't let you see it.

*L. Easy.* Then to give me a proof on't, let me see you refuse to go immediately and dine with me, after I have promised Sir Charles to bring you.

*L. Betty.* Pray don't ask me.

*L. Easy.* Why?

*L. Betty.* Because, to let you see I hate good-na-



ture, I'll go without asking, that you mayn't have the malice to say I did you a favour.

*L. Easy.* Thou art a mad creature.

[*Exeunt arm in arm.*]

### SCENE II.

*Changes to Sir CHARLES's Lodgings. Lord MORELOVE and Sir CHARLES at Picquet.*

*Sir Cha.* Come, my lord, one single game for the tout, and so have done.

*L. Mor.* No, hang 'em, I have enough of 'em? ill cards are the dullest company in the world—How much is it?

*Sir Cha.* Three parties.

*L. Mor.* Fifteen pounds—very well.

[*While Lord Morelove counts out his money, a Servant gives Sir Charles a Letter, which he reads to himself.*]

*Sir Cha.* [*To the Servant.*] Give my service, say I have company dines with me, if I have time I'll call there in the afternoon—ha! ha! ha! [*Exit Servant.*]

*L. Mor.* What's the matter—there—

[*Paying the money.*]

*Sir Cha.* The old affair—my Lady Graveairs.

*L. Mor.* Oh! Pr'ythee how does that go on?

*Sir Cha.* As agreeably as a Chancery suit: for now it's come to the intolerable plague of my not being able to get rid on't; as you may see—

[*Giving the Letter.*]

*L. Mor.* [*reads.*] "Your behaviour since I came to Windsor has convinced me of your villany, without my being surprised or angry at it. I desire you would let me see you at my lodgings immediately, where I shall have a better opportunity to convince you, that I never can, or positively will, be as I have been. Yours, &c." A very whimsical letter!—Faith, I think she has hard luck with you: if a man were obliged to have a mistress, her person and condition seem to be cut out for the ease of a lover: for she's a young, handsome, wild, well-jointur'd widow—But what's your quarrel?

*Sir Cha.* Nothing—She sees the coolness happens to be first on my side, and her business with me now, I suppose, is to convince me how heartily she's vexed that she was not beforehand with me.

*L. Mor.* Her pride, and your indifference, must occasion a pleasant scene, sure; what do you intend to do?

*Sir Cha.* Treat her with a cold familiar air, till I pique her to forbid me her sight, and then take her at her word.

*L. Mor.* Very gallant and provoking.

*Enter a Servant.*

*Serv.* Sir, my Lord Foppington— [*Exit.*]

*Sir Cha.* Oh—now, my lord, if you have a mind to be let into the mystery of making love without pain—here's one that's a master of the art, and shall de-claim to you—

*Enter Lord FOPPINGTON.*

My dear Lord Foppington?

*L. Fop.* My dear agreeable! *Que je t'embrasse! Par-di! Il y a cent ans que je ne t'ai vu*—my lord, I am your lordship's most obedient humble servant.

*L. Mor.* My lord, I kiss your hands—I hope we shall have you here some time; you seem to have laid in a stock of health to be in at the diversions of the place—You look extremely well.

*L. Fop.* To see one's friends look so, my lord, may easily give a *vermeille* to one's complexion.

*Sir Cha.* Lovers in hope, my lord, always have a visible brilliant in their eyes and air.

*L. Fop.* What dost thou mean, Charles?

*Sir Cha.* Come, come, confess what really brought you to Windsor, now you have no business there?

*L. Fop.* Why two hours, and six of the best nags in Christendom, or the devil drive me.

*L. Mor.* You make haste, my lord.

*L. Fop.* My lord, I always fly when I pursue—But they are well kept indeed—I love to have creatures go as I bid 'em; you have seen 'em, Charles, but so has all the world; Foppington's long tails are known on every road in England.

*Sir Cha.* Well, my lord, but how came they to bring you this road? You don't use to take these irregular jaunts without some design in your head of having more than nothing to do.

*L. Fop.* Pshaw! Pox! pr'ythee, Charles, thou

knowest I am a fellow *sans consequence*, be where I will.

*Sir Cha.* Nay, nay, this is too much among friends, my lord; come, come,—we must have it, your real business here?

*L. Fop.* Why then, *entre nous*, there is a certain *fille de joye* about the court here, that loves winning at cards better than all the fine things I have been able to say to her,—so I have brought an odd thousand bill in my pocket that I design, *tête-à-tête*, to play off with her at picquet, or so; and now the business is out.

*Sir Cha.* Ah, and a very good business too, my lord.

*L. Fop.* If it be well done, Charles——

*Sir Cha.* That's as you manage your cards, my lord.

*L. Mor.* This must be a woman of consequence, by the value you set upon her favours.

*Sir Cha.* Oh, nothing's above the price of a fine woman.

*L. Fop.* Nay, look you, gentlemen, the price may not happen to be altogether so high neither—For I fancy I know enough of the game, to make it an even bet I get her for nothing.

*L. Mor.* How so, my lord?

*L. Fop.* Because, if she happen to lose a good sum to me, I shall buy her with her own money.

*L. Mor.* That's new, I confess.

*L. Fop.* You know, Charles, 'tis not impossible but

I may be five hundred pounds deep with her—then bills may fall short, and the devil's in't if I want assurance to ask her to pay some way or other.

*Sir Cha.* And a man must be a churl indeed, that won't take a lady's personal security; hah! hah! hah!

*L. Fop.* Heh! heh! heh! thou art a devil, Charles.

*L. Mor.* Death! how happy is this coxcomb?

[*Aside.*

*L. Fop.* But to tell you the truth, gentlemen, I had another pressing temptation that brought me hither, which was—my wife.

*L. Mor.* That's kind, indeed, my lady has been here this month: she'll be glad to see you.

*L. Fop.* That I don't know; for I design this afternoon to send her to London.

*L. Mor.* What! the same day you come, my lord? that would be cruel.

*L. Fop.* Aye, but it will be mighty convenient; for she is positively of no manner of use in my amours.

*L. Mor.* That's your fault, the town thinks her a very deserving woman.

*L. Fop.* If she were a woman of the town, perhaps I should think so too; but she happens to be my wife, and when a wife is once given to deserve more than her husband's inclinations can pay, in my mind she has no merit at all.

*L. Mor.* She's extremely well-bred, and of a very prudent conduct.

*L. Fop.* Um—aye—the woman's proud enough.



*L. Mor.* Add to this, all the world allows her handsome.

*L. Fop.* The world's extremely civil, my lord; and I should take it as a favour done me, if they could find an expedient to unmarry the poor woman from the only man in the world that can't think her handsome.

*L. Mor.* I believe there are a great many in the world that are sorry 'tis not in their power to unmarry her.

*L. Fop.* I am a great many in the world's very humble servant, and whenever they find 'tis in their power, their high and mighty wisdoms may command me at a quarter of an hour's warning.

*L. Mor.* Pray, my lord, what did you marry for?

*L. Fop.* To pay my debts at play, and disinherit my younger brother.

*L. Mor.* But there are some things due to a wife.

*L. Fop.* And there are some debts I don't care to pay—to both which I plead husband, and my lord.

*L. Mor.* If I should do so, I should expect to have my own coach stopt in the street, and to meet my wife with the windows up in a hackney.

*L. Fop.* Then would I put in bail, and order a separate maintenance.

*L. Mor.* So pay the double the sum of the debt, and be married for nothing.

*L. Fop.* Now I think deferring a dun, and getting rid of one's wife, are two the most agreeable sweets in the liberties of an English subject.

*L. Mor.* If I were married, I would as soon part from my estate as my wife.

*L. Fop.* Now I would not, sun-burn me if I would.

*L. Mor.* Death! but since you are thus indifferent, my lord, why would you needs marry a woman of so much merit? Could not you have laid out your spleen upon some ill-natured shrew, that wanted the plague of an ill husband, and have let her alone to some plain, honest man of quality, that would have deserved her.

*L. Fop.* Why faith, my lord, that might have been considered; but I really grew so passionately fond of her fortune, that, curse catch me, I was quite blind to the rest of her good qualities: for, to tell you the truth, if it had been possible the old put of a peer could have tossed me in t'other five thousand for 'em, by my consent, she should have relinquished her merit and virtues to any of her younger sisters.

*Sir Cha.* Aye, zye, my lord, virtues in a wife are good for nothing but to make her proud, and put the world in mind of her husband's faults.

*L. Fop.* Right, Charles: and, strike me blind, but the women of virtue are now grown such idiots in love, that they expect of a man, just as they do of a coach-horse, that one's appetite, like t'other's flesh, should increase by feeding,

*Sir Cha.* Right, my lord, and don't consider, that *toujours chapons bouillis* will never do with an English stomach.

*L. Fop.* Ha! ha! ha! To tell you the truth, Charles,

I have known so much of that sort of eating, that I now think, for an hearty meal, no wild fowl in Europe is comparable to a joint of Banstead mutton.

*L. Mor.* How do you mean?

*L. Fop.* Why that, for my part, I had rather have a plain slice of my wife's woman, than my guts full of e'er an Ortolan dutchess in Christendom.

*L. Mor.* But I thought, my lord, your chief business now at Windsor had been your design upon a woman of quality.

*L. Fop.* That's true, my lord; though I don't think your fine lady the best dish myself, yet a man of quality can't be without such things at his table.

*L. Mor.* Oh, then you only desire the reputation of an affair with her.

*L. Fop.* I think the reputation is the most inviting part of an amour with most women of quality.

*L. Mor.* Why so, my lord?

*L. Fop.* Why, who the devil would run through all the degrees of form and ceremony, that lead one up to the last favour, if it were not for the reputation of understanding the nearest way to get over the difficulty?

*L. Mor.* But, my lord, does not the reputation of your being so general an undertaker frighten the women from engaging with you? For they say, no man can love but one at a time.

*L. Fop.* That's just one more than ever I came up to: for, stop my breath, if ever I loved one in my life.

*L. Mor.* How do you get 'em, then?

*L. Fop.* Why, sometimes as they get other people: I dress and let them get me; or, if that won't do, as I got my title, I buy 'em,

*L. Mor.* But how can you, that profess indifference, think it worth your while to come so often up to the price of a woman of quality?

*L. Fop.* Because you must know, my lord, that most of them begin now to come down to reason; I mean those that are to be had, for some die fools: but with the wiser sort, 'tis no', of late, so very expensive; now and then a *partie quarré*, a jaunt or two in a hack to an Indian house, a little China, an odd thing for a gown, or so, and in three days after, you meet her at the conveniency of trying it *chez Mademoiselle d'Epinglé*.

*Sir Cha.* Aye, aye, my lord, and when you are there, you know, what between a little chat, a dish of tea, Mademoiselle's good humour, and a *petit chanson*, or two, the devil's in't. if a man can't fool away the time, 'till he sees how it looks upon her by candle-light.

*L. Fop.* Heh! . heh! well said, Charles, I'gad I fancy thee and I have unlaced many a reputation there—Your great lady is as soon undressed as her woman.

*L. Mor.* I could never find it so—the shame or scandal of a repulse always made me afraid of attempting women of condition.

*Sir Cha.* Ha! ha! I'gad, my lord, you deserve to

be ill used; your modesty's enough to spoil any woman in the world; but my lord and I understand the sex a little better; we see plainly that women are only cold, as some men are brave, from the modesty or fear of those that attack 'em.

*L. Fop.* Right, Charles,—a man should no more give up his heart to a woman, than his sword to a bully; they are both as insolent as the devil after it.

*Sir Cha.* How do you like that, my lord?

[*Aside to Lord Morelove.*

*L. Mor.* Faith, I envy him—But, my lord, suppose your inclination should stumble upon a woman truly virtuous, would not a severe repulse from such an one, put you strangely out of countenance?

*L. Fop.* Not at all, my lord—for if a man don't mind a box o' the ear in a fair struggle with a fresh country girl, why the deuce should he be concerned at an impertinent frown for an attack upon a woman of quality?

*L. Mor.* Then you have no notion of a lady's cruelty?

*L. Fop.* Ha! ha! let me blood, if I think there's a greater jest in nature. I am ready to crack my guts with laughing, to see a senseless flirt, because the creature happens to have a little pride that she calls virtue about her, give herself all the insolent airs of resentment and disdain to an honest fellow, that all the while does not care three pinches of snuff if she and her virtue were to run with their last favours through the first regiment of guards—Ha!



ha ! it puts me in mind of an affair of mine, so impertinent——

*L. Mor.* Oh, that's impossible, my lord——Pray let's hear it.

*L. Fop.* Why I happened once to be very well in a certain man of quality's family, and his wife liked me.

*L. Mor.* How do you know she liked you ?

*L. Fop.* Why from the very moment I told her I liked her, she never durst trust herself at the end of a room with me.

*L. Mor.* That might be her not liking you.

*L. Fop.* My lord—Women of quality don't use to speak the thing plain—but, to satisfy you I did not want encouragement, I never came there in my life, but she did immediately smile, and borrow my snuff box.

*L. Mor.* She liked your snuff at least—Well, but how did she use you ?

*L. Fop.* By all that's infamous, she jilted me.

*L. Mor.* How ! Jilt you ?

*L. Fop.* Ay, death's curse, she jilted me.

*L. Mor.* Pray, let's hear.

*L. Fop.* For when I was pretty well convinced she had a mind to me, I one day made her a hint of an appointment : upon which, with an insolent frown in her face, (that made her look as ugly as the devil) she told me, that if ever I came thither again, her lord should know that she had forbidden me the house before.—Did you ever hear of such a slut ?

*Sir Cha.* Intolerable !

*L. Mor.* But how did her answer agree with you ?

*L. Fop.* Oh, passionately well ! for I stared full in her face, and burst out a laughing ; at which she turned upon her heel, and gave a crack with her fan like a coach-whip, and bridled out of the room with the air and complexion of an incensed Turkey-cock.

[*A servant whispers Sir Charles.*

*L. Mor.* What did you then ?

*L. Fop.* I——looked after her, gaped, threw up the sash, and fell a-singing out of the window——so that you see, my lord, while a man is not in love, there's no great affliction in missing one's way to a woman.

*Sir Cha.* Aye, aye, you talk this very well, my lord ; but now let's see how you dare behave yourself upon action—dinner's served, and the ladies stay for us—There's one within has been too hard for as brisk a man as yourself.

*L. Mor.* I guess who you mean—Have a care, my lord, she'll prove your courage for you.

*L. Fop.* Will she ? then she's an undone creature. For let me tell you, gentlemen, courage is the whole mystery of making love, and of more use than conduct is in war ; for the bravest fellow in Europe may beat his brains out against the stubborn walls of a town—But

——*Women, born to be controll'd,*

*Stoop to the forward, and the bold.*

[*Exeunt.*

ACT III. SCENE I.

*Continues. Enter Lord MORELOVE, and Sir CHARLES.*

*Lord Morelove.*

So! Did not I bear up bravely?

*Sir Cha.* Admirably! with the best bred insolence in nature, you insulted like a woman of quality when her country-bred husband's jealous of her in the wrong place.

*L. Mor.* Ha! ha! Did you observe, when I first came into the room, how carelessly she brushed her eyes over me, and when the company saluted me, stood all the while with her face to the window? ha! ha!

*Sir Cha.* What astonished airs she gave herself, when you asked her, what made her so grave upon her old friends?

*L. Mor.* And whenever I offered any thing in talk, what affected care she took to direct her observations of it to a third person?

*Sir Cha.* I observed she did not eat above the rump of a pigeon all dinner time.

*L. Mor.* And how she coloured when I told her, her ladyship had lost her stomach?

*Sir Cha.* If you keep your temper she's undone.

*L. Mor.* Provided she sticks to her pride, I believe I may.

*Sir Cha.* Aye! never fear her; I warrant, in the

humour she is in, she would as soon part with her sense of feeling.

*L. Mor.* Well, what's to be done next?

*Sir Cha.* Only observe her motions: for, by her behaviour at dinner, I am sure she designs to gall you with my lord Foppington: if so, you must even stand her fire, and then play my lady Graveairs upon her, whom I'll immediately pique, and prepare for your purpose.

*L. Mor.* I understand you—the properest woman in the world too; for she'll certainly encourage the least offer from me, in hopes of revenging her slights upon you.

*Sir Cha.* Right; and the very encouragement she gives you, at the same time will give me a pretence to widen the breach of my quarrel with her.

*L. Mor.* Besides, Charles, I own I am fond of any attempt that will forward a misunderstanding there, for your lady's sake. A woman so truly good in her nature, ought to have something more from a man, than bare occasions to prove her goodness.

*Sir Cha.* Why, then, upon honour, my lord, to give you proof that I am positively the best husband in the world, my wife—never yet found me out.

*L. Mor.* That may be by her being the best wife in the world: she, may be, won't find you out.

*Sir Cha.* Nay, if she won't tell a man of his faults, when she sees them, how the deuce should he mend them? But, however, you see I am going to leave them off as fast as I can.

*L. Mor.* Being tired of a woman, is, indeed, a pretty

tolerable assurance of a man's not designing to fool on with her—Here she comes, and, if I don't mistake, brimful of reproaches—You can't take her in a better time—I'll leave you.

*Enter Lady GRAVEAIRS.*

Your ladyship's most humble servant. Is the company broke up, pray?

*L. Gra.* No, my lord, they are just talking of basset; my Lord Foppington has a mind to tally, if your lordship would encourage the table.

*L. Mor.* Oh, madam, with all my heart! But Sir Charles, I know, is hard to be got to it: I'll leave your ladyship to prevail with him. [*Exit L. Morelove.*]

[*Sir Charles and Lady Graveairs salute coldly, and trifle some time before they speak.*]

*L. Gra.* Sir Charles, I sent you a note this morning—

*Sir Cha.* Yes, madam; but there were some passages I did not expect from your ladyship; you seem to tax me with things that—

*L. Gra.* Look you, sir, 'tis not at all material whether I taxed you with any thing or no; I don't desire you to clear yourself; upon my word, you may be very easy as to that matter; for my part, I am mighty well satisfied things are as they are; all I have to say to you is, that you need not give yourself the trouble to call at my lodgings this afternoon, if you should have time, as you were pleased to send me word—and so, your servant, sir, that's all—

[*Going.*]



*Sir Cha.* Hold, madam.

*L. Gra.* Look you, Sir Charles, 'tis not your calling me back that will signify any thing, I can assure you.

*Sir Cha.* Why this extraordinary haste, madam?

*L. Gra.* In short, Sir Charles, I have taken a great many things from you of late, that you know I have often told you I would positively bear no longer. But I see things are in vain, and the more people strive to oblige people, the less they are thanked for it: and since there must be an end of one's ridiculousness one time or other, I don't see any time so proper as the present; and therefore, sir, I desire you would think of things accordingly. Your servant.

[*Going, he holds her.*]

*Sir Cha.* Nay, madam, let us start fair, however; you ought, at least, to stay till I am as ready as your ladyship; and then, if we must part,

*Adieu, ye silent grots, and shady groves;*

*'Tis soft amusements of our growing loves;*

*Adieu, ye whisper'd sighs, that fann'd the fire,*

*And all the thrilling joys of young desire.*

[*Affectedly.*]

*L. Gra.* Oh, mighty well, sir; I am very glad we are at last come to a right understanding, the only way I have long wished for; not but I'd have you to know I see your design thro' all your painted ease of resignation: I know you'd give your soul to make me uneasy now.

*Sir Cha.* Oh, fie, madam! upon my word I would not make you uneasy, if it were in my power.

*L. Gra.* Oh, dear sir, you need not take such care, upon my word; you'll find I can part with you without the least disorder; I'll try, at least; and so, once more, and for ever, sir, your servant: not but you must give me leave to tell you, as my last thought of you too, that I do think—you are a villain.

[*Exit hastily.*]

*Sir Cha.* Oh, your very humble servant, madam!—

[*Bowing low.*]

What a charming quality is a woman's pride, that is strong enough to refuse a man her favours, when he's weary of them——Ah!

*Re-enter Lady GRAVEAIRS.*

*L. Gra.* Look you, Sir Charles; don't presume upon the easiness of my temper: for to convince you that I am positively in earnest in this matter, I desire you would let me have what letters you have had of mine since you came to Windsor; and I expect you'll return the rest, as I will yours, as soon as we come to London.

*Sir Cha.* Upon my faith, madam, I never keep any; I always put snuff in them, and so they wear out.

*L. Gra.* Sir Charles, I must have them; for positively I won't stir without them.

*Sir Cha.* Ha! then I must be civil, I see. [*Aside.*] Perhaps, madam, I have no mind to part with them—or you.

*L. Gra.* Look you, sir, all those sort of things are in vain, now there's an end of every thing between us

—If you say you won't give them, I must e'en get them as well as I can.

*Sir Cha.* Ha! that won't do then, I find. [*Aside.*]

*L. Gra.* Who's there? Mrs. Edging—Your keeping a letter, sir, won't keep me, I'll assure you.

*Enter EDGING.*

*Edg.* Did your ladyship call me, madam?

*L. Gra.* Ay, child: pray do me the favour to fetch my cloak out of the dining-room.

*Edg.* Yes, madam.

*Sir Cha.* Oh, then there's hope again. [*Aside.*]

*Edg.* Ha! she looks as if my master had quarrelled with her; I hope she's going away in a huff—she shan't stay for her cloak, I warrant her—This is pure. [*Aside. Exit smiling.*]

*L. Gra.* Pray, Sir Charles, before I go, give me leave, now after all, to ask you—why you have used me thus?

*Sir Cha.* What is it you call usage, madam?

*L. Gra.* Why, then, since you will have it, how comes it you have been so grossly careless and neglectful of me of late? Only tell me seriously, wherein I have deserved this.

*Sir Cha.* Why, then, seriously, madam——

*Re-enter EDGING with a cloak.*

We are interrupted——

*Edg.* Here is your ladyship's cloak, madam.

*L. Gra.* Thank you, Mrs. Edging—Oh, law! pray will you let somebody get me a chair to the door.

*Edg. Humph—*She might have told me that before, if she had been in such haste to go. [*Aside. Exit.*]

*L. Gra.* Now, sir.

*Sir Cha.* Then, seriously, I say I am of late grown so very lazy in my pleasures, “that I had rather lose  
“a woman, than go through the plague and trouble  
“of having or keeping her: and, to be free, I have  
“found so much, even in my acquaintance with you,  
“whom I confess to be a mistress in the art of pleas-  
“ing,” that I am from henceforth resolved to follow  
no pleasure that arises above the degree of amusement—And that woman that expects I should make her my business; why—like my business, is then in a fair way of being forgot. When once she comes to reproach me with vows and usage, and stuff—I had as lief hear her talk of bills, bonds, and ejectments: her passion becomes as troublesome as a law-suit, and I would as soon converse with my solicitor. In short, I shall never care sixpence for any woman that won’t be obedient.

*L. Gra.* I’ll swear, sir, you have a very free way of treating people; I am glad I am so well acquainted with your principles, however—And you would have me obedient?

*Sir Cha.* Why not? My wife’s so; and I think she has as much pretence to be proud as your ladyship.

*L. Gra.* Lard! is there no chair to be had, I wonder?

*Enter EDGING.*

*Edg.* Here's a chair, madam.

*L. Gra.* 'Tis very well, Mrs. Edging: pray will you let somebody get me a glass of fair water?

*Edg.* Humph—her huff is almost over, I suppose—  
I see he's a villain still. *[Aside. Exit.*

*L. Gra.* Well, that was the prettiest fancy about obedience, sure, that ever was. Certainly, a woman of condition must be infinitely happy under the dominion of so generous a lover. “But how came you  
“to forget kicking and whipping all this while? Me-  
“thinks, you should not have left so fashionable an  
“article out of your scheme of government.

“*Sir Cha.* Um—No, there is too much trouble  
“in that; though I have known them of admirable  
“use in reformation of some humoursome gentle-  
“women.”

*L. Gra.* But one thing more, and I have done—  
Pray, what degree of spirit must the lady have, that is to make herself happy under so much freedom, order, and tranquillity?

*Sir Cha.* Oh, she must at least have as much spirit as your ladyship, or she'd give me no pleasure in breaking it.

*L. Gra.* No, that would be troublesome. You had better take one that's broken to your hand: there are such souls to be hired, I believe; things that will rub your temples in an evening, till you fall fast asleep in their laps; creatures, too, that think their wages



their reward. I fancy, at last, that will be the best method for the lazy passion of a married man, that has out-lived his any other sense of gratification.

*Sir Cha.* Look you, madam; I have loved you very well a great while; now you would have me love you better and longer, which is not in my power to do; and I don't think there is any plague upon earth, like a dun that comes for more money than one is ever likely to be able to pay.

*L. Gra.* A dun! Do you take me for a dun, sir? Do I come a dunning to you? [*Walks in a heat.*]

*Sir Cha.* Hist! don't expose yourself—here's company——

*L. Gra.* I care not——A dun! You shall see, sir, I can revenge an affront, tho' I despise the wretch that offers it——A dun! Oh, I could die with laughing at the fancy! [*Exit.*]

*Sir Cha.* So—she's in admirable order——Here comes my lord; and, I am afraid, in the very nick of his occasion for her.

*Enter Lord MORELOVE.*

*L. Mor.* Oh, Charles, undone again! all is lost and ruined.

*Sir Cha.* What's the matter now?

*L. Mor.* I have been playing the fool yonder, even to contempt; my senseless jealousy has confessed a weakness I never shall forgive myself. She has insulted on it to that degree too—I can't bear the thought——Oh, Charles, this devil still is mistress of

my heart! and I could dash my brains out to think how grossly too I have let her know it.

*Sir Cha.* Ah, how it would tickle her if she saw you in this condition! ha, ha, ha!

*L. Mor.* Pr'ythee don't torture me: think of some present ease, or I shall burst.

*Sir Cha.* Well, well, let's hear, pray—What has she done to you? Ha, ha!

*L. Mor.* Why, ever since I left you, she has treated me with so much coolness and ill nature, and that thing of a lord, with “so much laughing ease, such “an acquainted,” such a spiteful familiarity, that, at the last, she saw, and triumphed in my uneasiness.

*Sir Cha.* Well, and so you left the room in a pet? Ha!

*L. Mor.* Oh, worse, worse still! for at last, with half shame and anger in my looks, I thrust myself between my lord and her, pressed her by the hand, and in a whisper, trembling, begged her, in pity of herself and me, to shew her good humour only where she knew it was truly valued: at which she broke from me with a cold smile, sat her down by the peer, whispered him, and burst into a loud laughter in my face.

*Sir Cha.* Ha, ha! then would I have given fifty pounds to have seen your face. Why, what in the name of common sense had you to do with humility? Will you never have enough on't? Death! 'twas setting a lighted match to gunpowder, to blow yourself up.

*L. Mor.* I see my folly now, Charles. But what shall I do with the remains of life that she has left me?

*Sir Cha.* Oh, throw it at her feet, by all means! put on your tragedy face, catch fast hold of her petticoat, whip out your handkerchief, and in point blank verse, desire her, one way or other, to make an end of the business. [In a whining tone.]

*L. Mor.* What a fool dost thou make me!

*Sir Cha.* I only shew you as you came out of her hands, my lord.

*L. Mor.* How contemptibly have I behaved myself?

*Sir Cha.* That's according as you bear her behaviour.

*L. Mor.* Bear it! no—I thank thee, Charles; thou hast waked me now; and if I bear it—What have you done with my Lady Graveairs?

*Sir Cha.* Your business, I believe—She's ready for you; she's just gone down stairs, and if you don't make haste after her, I expect her back again, with a knife or a pistol presently.

*L. Mor.* I'll go this minute.

*Sir Cha.* No, stay a little: here comes my lord; we'll see what we can get out of him, first.

“*L. Mor.* Methinks, now, I could laugh at her.”

*Enter Lord FOPPINGTON.*

*L. Fop.* Nay, pr'ythee, Sir Charles, let's have a little of thee—We have been so *chagrin* without

thee, that, stop my breath, the ladies are gone half asleep to church for want of thy company.

*Sir Cha.* That's hard, indeed, while your lordship was among them. Is Lady Betty gone too?

*L. Fop.* She was just upon the wing; but I caught her by the snuff-box, and she pretends to stay to see if I'll give it her again, or no.

*L. Mor.* Death! 'tis that I gave her, and the only present she would ever receive from me—Ask him how he came by it. [Aside to Sir Charles.

*Sir Cha.* Pr'ythee don't be uneasy—Did she give it you, my lord?

*L. Fop.* Faith, Charles, I can't say she did, or she did not; but we were playing the fool, and I took it—*à la*—Pshaw! I can't tell thee in French neither; but Horace touches it to a nicety—'twas *pignus direptum malè pertinaci*.

*L. Mor.* So—but I must bear it—If your lordship has a mind to the box, I'll stand by you in keeping of it.

*L. Fop.* My lord, I am passionately obliged to you; but I am afraid I cannot answer your hazarding so much of the lady's favour.

*L. Mor.* Not at all, my lord: 'tis possible I may not have the same regard to her frown that your lordship has.

*L. Fop.* That's a bite, I am sure—he'd give a joint of his little finger to be as well with her as I am. [Aside.] But here she comes—Charles, stand by

me——Must not a man be a vain coxcomb now, to think this creature followed one?

*Sir Cha.* Nothing so plain, my lord.

*L. Fop.* Flattering devil!

*Enter Lady BETTY.*

*L. Betty.* Pshaw, my Lord Foppington! pr'ythee don't play the fool now, but give me my snuff-box—Sir Charles, help me to take it from him.

*Sir Cha.* You know I hate trouble, madam.

*L. Betty.* Pooh! you'll make me stay till prayers are half over now.

*L. Fop.* If you'll promise me not to go to church, I'll give it you.

*L. Betty.* I'll promise nothing at all; for positively I will have it. *[Struggling with him.]*

*L. Fop.* Then, comparatively, I won't part with it. Ha, ha! *[Struggles with her.]*

*L. Betty.* Oh, you devil, you have killed my arm! Oh!——Well, if you'll let me have it, I'll give you a better.

*L. Mor.* Oh, Charles! that has a view of distant kindness in it. *[Aside to Sir Charles.]*

*L. Fop.* Nay, now I keep it superlatively——I find there's a secret value in it.

*L. Betty.* Oh, dismal! Upon my word, I am only ashamed to give it to you. Do you think I would offer such an odious fancied thing to any body I had the least value for?



*Sir Cha.* Now it comes a little nearer, methinks it does not seem to be any kindness at all.

[*Aside to Lord Morelove.*

*L. Fop.* Why, really, madam, upon second view, it has not extremely the mode of a lady's utensil. Are you sure it never held any thing but snuff?

*L. Betty.* Oh, you monster!

*L. Fop.* Nay, I only ask, because it seems to me to have very much the air and fancy of Monsieur Smoakandsot's tobacco-box.

*L. Mor.* I can bear no more.

*Sir Cha.* Why, don't, then; I'll step in to the company, and return to your relief immediately. [*Exit.*

*L. Mor.* [*To Lady Bet.*] Come, madam, will your ladyship give me leave to end the difference? Since the slightness of the thing may let you bestow it without any mark of favour, shall I beg it of your ladyship.

*L. Bet.* Oh, my lord, nobody sooner—I beg you give it, my lord. [*Looking earnestly on Lord Fop. who, smiling, gives it to Lord Mor. and then bows gravely to her*]

*L. Mor.* Only to have the honour of restoring it to your lordship; and if there be any other trifle of mine your lordship has a fancy to, tho' it were a mistress, I don't know any person in the world that has so good a claim to my resignation.

*L. Fop.* Oh, my lord, this generosity will distract me!

*L. Mor.* My lord, I do you but common justice.

But from your conversation, I had never known the true value of the sex. You positively understand them the best of any man breathing; therefore I think every one of common prudence ought to resign to you.

*L. Fop.* Then, positively, your lordship is the most obliging person in the world; for I'm sure your judgment can never like any woman that is not the finest creature in the universe. [*Bowing to Lady Betty.*]

*L. Mor.* Oh, your lordship does me too much honour! I have the worst judgment in the world; no man has been more deceived in it.

*L. Fop.* Then your lordship, I presume, has been apt to choose in a mask, or by candle-light.

*L. Mor.* In a mask, indeed, my lord, and of all masks the most dangerous.

*L. Fop.* Pray, what's that, my lord?

*L. Mor.* A bare face.

*L. Fop.* Your lordship will pardon me, if I don't so readily comprehend how a woman's bare face can hide her face.

*L. Mor.* It often hides her heart, my lord; and therefore I think it sometimes a more dangerous mask than a piece of velvet: that's rather a mark than a disguise of an ill woman. But the mischiefs skulking behind a beauteous form give no warning; they are always sure, fatal, and innumerable.

*L. Betty.* Oh, barbarous aspersion! My lord Fopington, have you nothing to say for the poor women?

*L. Fop.* I must confess, madam, nothing of this nature ever happened in my course of amours. I always judge the beauteous part of a woman to be the most agreeable part of her composition; and when once a lady does me the honour to toss that into my arms, I think myself obliged, in good nature, not to quarrel about the rest of her equipage.

*L. Betty.* Why, ay, my lord, there's some good humour in that now.

*L. Mor.* He's happy in a plain English stomach, madam; I could recommend a dish that's perfectly to your lordship's *goût*, where beauty is the only sauce to it.

*L. Betty.* So——

*L. Fop.* My lord, when my wine's right, I never care it should be zested.

*L. Mor.* I know some ladies would thank you for that opinion.

*L. Betty.* My Lord Morelove is really grown such a churl to the women, I don't only think he is not, but can't conceive how he ever could be, in love.

*L. Mor.* Upon my word, madam, I once thought I was.

[Smiling.]

*L. Betty.* Fie, fie! how could you think so? I fancy now you had only a mind to domineer over some poor creature, and so you thought you were in love; ha, ha!

*L. Mor.* The lady I loved, madam, grew so unfortunate in her conduct, that at last she brought me to

treat her with the same indifference and civility as I now pay your ladyship.

*L. Betty.* And, ten to one, just at that time she never thought you such tolerable company.

*L. Mor.* That I can't say, madam; for at that time she grew so affected, there was no judging of her thoughts at all. *[Mimicking her.]*

*L. Betty.* What, and so you left the poor lady. Oh, you inconstant-creature!

*L. Mor.* No, madam, to have loved her on had been inconstancy; for she was never two hours together the same woman.

*[Lady Bet. and Lord Mor. seem to talk.]*

*L. Fop.* *[Aside.]* Ha, ha, ha! I see he has a mind to abuse her; so I'll even give him an opportunity of doing his business with her at once for ever—My lord, I perceive your lordship is going to be good company to the lady; and, for her sake, I don't think it good manners in me to disturb you—

*Enter Sir CHARLES.*

*Sir Cha.* My Lord Foppington—

*L. Fop.* Oh, Charles! I was just wanting thee—Hark thee—I have three thousand secrets for thee—I have made such discoveries! to tell thee all in one word, Morelove's as jealous of me as the devil, he, he, he!

*Sir Cha.* Is it possible? Has she given him any occasion?

*L. Fop.* Only rallied him to death upon my account;

she told me, within, just now, she'd use him like a dog, and begged me to draw off for an opportunity.

*Sir Cha.* Oh, keep in while the scent lies, and she is your own, my lord.

*L. Fop.* I can't tell that, Charles; but I am sure she is fairly unharboured; and when once I throw off my inclinations, I usually follow them till the game has enough on't: and between thee and I, she is pretty well blown too; she can't stand long; I believe; for, curse catch me, if I have not rid down half a thousand pounds after her already.

*Sir Cha.* What do you mean?

*L. Fop.* I have lost five hundred to her at piquet since dinner.

*Sir Cha.* You are a fortunate man, faith; you are resolved not to be thrown out, I see.

*L. Fop.* Hang it, what should a man come out for, if he does not keep up to the sport?

*Sir Cha.* Well pushed, my lord.

*L. Fop.* Tayo! have at her——

*Sir Cha.* Down, down, my lord——ah! 'ware haunches!

*L. Fop.* Ah, Charles! [*Embracing him.*] Pr'ythee, let's observe a little: there's a foolish cur, now I have run her to a stand, has a mind to be at her by himself; and thou shalt see, she won't stir out of her way for him. [*They stand aside.*]

*L. Mor.* Ha, ha! your ladyship is very grave of a sudden; you look as if your lover had insolently recovered his common senses.



*L. Betty.* And your lordship is so very gay, and unlike yourself, one would swear you were just come from the pleasure of making your mistress afraid of you.

*L. Mor.* No, faith, quite contrary; for, do you know, madam, I have just found out, that, upon your account, I have made myself one of the most ridiculous puppies upon the face of the earth—I have, upon my faith—nay, and so extravagantly such, ha, ha, ha! that it is at last become a jest even to myself; and I can't help laughing at it for the soul of me, ha, ha, ha!

*L. Betty.* I want to cure him of that laugh, now. [*Aside.*] My lord, since you are so generous, I'll tell you another secret—Do you know, too, that I still find, (spite of all your great wisdom, and my contemptible qualities, as you are pleased, now and then, to call them) do you know, I say, that I see, under all this, that you still love me with the same helpless passion: and can your vast foresight imagine I won't use you accordingly for these extraordinary airs you are pleased to give yourself?

*L. Mor.* Oh, by all means, madam! 'tis fit you should, and I expect it, whenever it is in your power—Confusion! [*Aside.*]

*L. Betty.* My lord, you have talked to me this half hour, without confessing pain. [*Pauses, and affects to gape.*] Only remember it.

*L. Mor.* Hell and tortures!

*L. Betty.* What did you say, my lord?

*L. Mor.* Fire and furies!

*L. Betty.* Ha, ha! he's disordered—Now I am easy—My Lord Foppington, have you a mind to your revenge at picquet?

*L. Fop.* I have always a mind to an opportunity of entertaining your ladyship, madam.

[*Lady Betty coquets with Lord Fop.*]

*L. Mor.* Oh, Charles! the insolence of this woman might furnish out a thousand devils.

*Sir Cha.* And your temper is enough to furnish out a thousand such women. Come away; I have business for you upon the terrace.

*L. Mor.* Let me but speak one word to her.

*Sir Cha.* Not a syllable: the tongue's a weapon you'll always have the worst at; for I see you have no guard, and she carries a devilish edge.

*L. Betty.* My lord, don't let any thing I have said frighten you away; for if you have the least inclination to stay and rail, you know the old conditions; 'tis but your asking me pardon the next day, and you may give your passion any liberty you think fit.

*L. Mor.* Daggers and death!

*Sir Cha.* *Is the man distracted?*

*L. Mor.* Let me speak to her now, or I shall burst—

*Sir Cha.* Upon condition you'll speak no more of her to me, my lord, do as you please.

*L. Mor.* Pr'ythee, pardon me—I know not what to do.

*Sir Cha.* Come along; I'll set you to work, I war-

ranſe you—Nay, nay, none of your parting ogles—  
Will you go?

*L. Mor.* Yes—and I hope for ever——

[*Exit Sir Cha. pulling away Lord Mor.*]

*L. Fop.* Ha, ha, ha! Did ever mortal monster set  
up for a lover with such unfortunate qualifications?

*L. Betty.* Indeed, my Lord Morelove has some-  
thing strangely singular in his manner.

*L. Fop.* I thought I should have burst to see the  
creature pretend to rally, and give himself the airs of  
one of us—But, run me through, madam, your lady-  
ship pushed like a fencing master; that last thrust  
was a *coup de grace*, I believe: I'm afraid his honour  
will hardly meet your ladyship in haste again.

*L. Betty.* Not unless his second, Sir Charles, keeps  
him better in practice, perhaps—Well, the humour  
of this creature has done me signal service to-day. I  
must keep it up, for fear of a second engagement.

[*Aside.*]

*L. Fop.* Never was poor wit so foiled at his own  
weapon, sure!

*L. Betty.* Wit! had he ever any pretence to it?

*L. Fop.* Ha, ha! he has not much in love, I think,  
tho' he wears the reputation of a very pretty young  
fellow among some sort of people; but, strike me  
stupid, if ever I could discover common sense in all  
the progress of his amours: he expects a woman  
should like him for endeavouring to convince her,  
that she has not one good quality belonging to the  
whole composition of her soul and body.

*L. Betty.* That, I suppose, is only in a modest hope that she'll mend her faults, to qualify herself for his vast merit, ha, ha!

*L. Fop.* Poor Morelove! I see she can't endure him. [*Aside.*]

*L. Betty.* Or if one really had all those faults, he does not consider that sincerity in love is as much out of fashion as sweet snuff; nobody takes it now.

*L. Fop.* Oh, no mortal, madam, unless it be here and there a squire, that's making his lawful court to the cherry-cheek charms of my Lord Bishop's great fat daughter in the country.

*L. Betty.* O what a surfeiting couple has he put together— [*Throwing her hand carelessly upon his.*]

*L. Fop.* Fond of me, by all that's tender—Poor fool, I'll give thee ease immediately. [*Aside.*—But, madam, you were pleased just now to offer me my revenge at piquet—Now here's nobody within, and I think we can't make use of a better opportunity.

*L. Betty.* O! no: not now, my lord!—I have a favour I would fain beg of you first.

*L. Fop.* But time, madam, is very precious in this place, and I shall not easily forgive myself if I don't take him by the forelock.

*L. Betty.* But I have a great mind to have a little more sport with my Lord Morelove first, and would fain beg your assistance.

*L. Fop.* O! with all my heart; and, upon second thoughts, I don't know but piquing a rival in public may be as good sport as being well with a mistress in

private: for, after all, the pleasure of a fine woman is like that of her virtue, not so much in the thing, as the reputation of having it. [*Aside.*]—Well, madam, but how can I serve you in this affair?

*L. Betty.* Why, methought, as my Lord Morelove went out, he shewed a stern resentment in his look, that seemed to threaten me with rebellion, and downright defiance: now I have a great fancy that you and I should follow him to the Terrace, and laugh at his resolution before he has time to put it in practice.

*L. Fop.* And so punish his fault before he commits it! ha! ha! ha!

*L. Betty.* Nay, we won't give him time, if his courage should fail, to repent it.

*L. Fop.* Ha! ha! ha! let me blood, if I don't long to be at it, ha! ha!

*L. Betty.* O! 'twill be such diversion to see him bite his lips, and broil within, only with seeing us ready to split our sides in laughing at nothing! ha! ha!

*L. Fop.* Ha! ha! I see the creature does really like me. [*Aside.*] And then, madam, to hear him hum a broken piece of a tune, in affectation of his not minding us—'twill be so foolish, when we know he loves us to death all the while, ha! ha!

*L. Betty.* And if at last his sage mouth should open in surly contradiction of our humour, then will we, in pure opposition to his, immediately fall foul upon every thing that is not gallant and fashionable: constancy shall be the mark of age and ugliness, virtue



a jest, we'll rally discretion out of doors, lay gravity at our feet, and only love, free love, disorder, liberty, and pleasure, be our standing principles.

*L. Fop.* Madam, you transport me: for if ever I was obliged to nature for any one tolerable qualification, 'twas positively the talent of being exuberantly pleasant upon this subject—I am impatient—my fancy's upon the wing already—let's fly to him.

*L. Betty.* No, no; stay till I am just got out; our going together won't be so proper.

*L. Fop.* As your ladyship pleases, madam—But when this affair is over, you won't forget that I have a certain revenge due.

*L. Betty.* Aye, aye! after supper I am for you—Nay, you shan't stir a step, my lord!—

[*Seeing her to the door.*]

*L. Fop.* Only to tell you, you have fixed me yours to the last existence of my soul's eternal entity.—

*L. Betty.* O, your servant.

[*Exit.*]

*L. Fop.* Ha, ha! stark mad for me, by all that's handsome! Poor Morelove! That a fellow, who has ever been abroad, should think a woman of her spirit is to be taken by a regular siege, “as the confederates do towns,” when “so many of the French successes might have shewn him,” the surest way is to whisper the governor.—“How can a coxcomb give himself the fatigue of bombarding a woman's understanding, when he may with so much ease make a friend of her constitution—” I'll see if I can shew him a little French play with Lady Betty—

let me see—aye, I'll make an end of it the old way, get her into picquet at her own lodgings—not mind one tittle of my play, give her every game before she's half up, that she may judge of the strength of my inclination by my haste of losing up to her price; then of a sudden, with a familiar leer, cry—rat piquet—sweep counters, cards, and money all upon the floor, *Et donc—l'affaire est faite.* [Exit.]

ACT IV. SCENE I.

*The Castle Terrace. Enter Lady BETTY, and Lady EASY.*

*Lady Easy.*

My dear, you really talk to me as if I were your lover and not your friend: or else I am so dull, that by all you've said I can't make the least guess at your real thoughts—Can you be serious for a moment?

*L. Betty.* Not easily: but I would do more to oblige you.

*L. Easy.* Then pray deal ingenuously, and tell me without reserve, are you sure you don't love my Lord Morelove?

*L. Betty.* Then seriously—I think not—But because I won't be positive, you shall judge by the worst of my symptoms—First, I own I like his conversation, his person has neither fault, nor beauty—well enough—I don't remember I ever secretly wished

myself married to him, or—that I ever seriously resolved against it.

*L. Easy.* Well, so far you are tolerably safe :—But come—as to his manner of addressing you, what effect has that had ?

*L. Betty.* I am not a little pleased to observe few men follow a woman with the same fatigue and spirit that he does me——am more pleased when he lets me use him ill ; and if ever I have a favourable thought of him, 'tis when I see he can't bear that usage.

*L. Easy.* Have a care ; that last is a dangerous symptom——he pleases your pride, I find.

*L. Betty.* Oh ! perfectly : in that——I own no mortal ever can come up to him.

*L. Easy.* But now, my dear ! now comes the main point——Jealousy ! Are you sure you have never been touched with it ? Tell me that with a safe conscience, and then I pronounce you clear.

*L. Betty.* Nay, then I defy him ; for positively I was never jealous in my life.

*L. Easy.* How, madam ! have you never been stirred enough, to think a woman strangely forward for being a little familiar in talk with him ? Or, are you sure his gallantry to another never gave you the least disorder ? Were you never, upon no accident, in an apprehension of losing him ?

*L. Betty.* Hah ! Why, madam—Bless me !—wh—wh—why sure you don't call this jealousy, my dear ?

*L. Easy.* Nay, nay, that is not the business—Have you ever felt any thing of this nature, madam ?

*L. Betty.* Lord! don't be so hasty, my dear—any thing of this nature—O Lud! I swear I don't like it: dear creature, bring me off here; for I am half frightened out of my wits.

*L. Easy.* Nay, if you can rally upon't, your wound is not over deep; I'm afraid.

*L. Betty.* Well, that's comfortably said, however.

*L. Easy.* But come to the point—How far have you been jealous?

*L. Betty.* Why,—O, bless me! He gave the music one night to my Lady Languish here upon the terrace: and (tho' she and I were very good friends) I remember I could not speak to her in a week for't—Oh!

*L. Easy.* Nay, now you may laugh if you can: for, take my word, the marks are upon you—But come—what else?

*L. Betty.* O, nothing else, upon my word, my dear!

*L. Easy.* Well, one word more, and then I give sentence: suppose you were heartily convinced, that he actually followed another woman?

*L. Betty.* But, pray, my dear, what occasion is there to suppose any such a thing at all?

*L. Easy.* Guilty, upon my honour.

*L. Betty.* Pshaw! I defy him to say, that ever I owned any inclination for him.

*L. Easy.* No, but you have given him terrible leave to guess it.

*L. Betty.* If ever you see us meet again, you'll have but little reason to think so, I can assure you.

*L. Easy.* That I shall see presently; for here comes Sir Charles, and I'm sure my lord can't be far off.

*Enter Sir CHARLES.*

*Sir Cha.* Servant, Lady Betty—my dear, how do you do?

*L. Easy.* At your service, my dear—but, pray what have you done with my Lord Morelove?

*L. Betty.* Aye, Sir Charles, pray how does your pupil do? Have you any hopes of him? Is he do-  
cible?

*Sir Cha.* Well, madam, to confess your triumph  
“over me, as well as him, I own my hopes of him  
“are lost. I offer'd what I cou'd to his instruction,  
“but he is incorrigibly yours, and undone—and the  
“news, I presume, does not displease your ladyship.

*L. Betty.* Fye, fye, Sir Charles; you disparage  
“your friend, I am afraid you don't take pains with  
“him.

*Sir Cha.* Ha! I fancy, Lady Betty, your good-  
“nature won't let you sleep a nights: don't you love  
“dearly to hurt people?

*L. Betty.* O! your servant: then, without a jest,  
“the man is so unfortunate in his want of patience,  
“that, let me die, if I don't often pity him.

*Sir Cha.* Ha! Strange goodness—O that I were  
“your lover for a month or two.

*L. Betty.* What then!

*Sir Cha.* I wou'd make that pretty heart's blood  
“of yours ach in a fortnight.

H



" *L. Betty.* Hugh—I should hate you : your assurance wou'd make your address intolerable.

" *Sir Cha.* I believe it wou'd, for I'd never address you at all.

" *L. Betty.* O! you clown you!

" [*Hitting him with her fan.*

" *Sir Cha.* Why, what to do? to feed a diseased pride, that's eternally breaking out in the affectation of an ill-nature, that—in my conscience I believe is but affectation.

" *L. Betty.* You, or your friend, have no great reason to complain of my fondness, I believe. Ha, ha, ha!"

*Sir Cha.* [*Looking earnestly at her.*] Thou insolent creature! How can you make a jest of a man, whose whole life's but one continued torment, from your want of common gratitude?

*L. Betty.* Torment! for my part, I really believe him as easy as you are.

*Sir Cha.* Poor intolerable affectation! You know the contrary, you know him blindly yours, you know your power, and the whole pleasure of your life's the poor and low abuse of it.

*L. Betty.* Pray how do I abuse it—if I have any power.

*Sir Cha.* You drive him to extremes that make him mad, then punish him for acting against his reason: you've almost turned his brain, "his common judgment fails him;" he is now, at this very moment, driven by his despair upon a project, in hopes to free

him from your power, that I am sensible, and so must every one be that has his sense, of course must ruin him with you, for ever. "I almost blush to think of it, yet your unreasonable disdain has forced him to it;" and should he now suspect I offered but a hint of it to you, and in contempt of his design, I know he'd call my life to answer it: but I have no regard to men in madness, I rather choose for once to trust in your good-nature, in hopes the man, whom your unwary beauty had made miserable, your generosity wou'd scorn to make ridiculous.

*L. Betty.* Sir Charles, you charge me very home; I never had it in my inclination to make any thing ridiculous that did not deserve it. Pray, what is this business you think so extravagant in him?

*Sir Cha.* Something so absurdly rash and bold, you'll hardly forgive ev'n me that tell it you.

*L. Betty.* O fie! If it be a fault, Sir Charles, I shall consider it as his, not yours. Pray, what is it?

"*L. Easy.* I long to know, methinks."

*Sir Cha.* You may be sure he did not want my dissuasions from it.

*L. Betty.* Let's hear it.

*Sir Cha.* Why this man, whom I have known to love you with such excess of generous desire, whom I have heard in his ecstatic praises on your beauty talk, till from the soft heat of his distilling thoughts, the tears have fall'n——

*L. Betty.* O! Sir Charles——

[*Blushing.*]

*Sir Cha.* Nay, grudge not, since 'tis past, to hear

what was (though you contemned it) once his merit : but now I own that merit ought to be forgotten.

*L. Betty.* Pray, sir, be plain.

*Sir Cha.* This man, I say, whose unhappy passion has so ill succeeded with you, at last has forfeited all his hopes (into which, pardon me, I confess my friendship had lately flattered him) his hopes of even deserving now your lowest pity or regard.

*L. Betty.* You amaze me——For I can't suppose his utmost malice dares assault my reputation—and what—

*Sir Cha.* No, but he maliciously presumes the world will do it for him; and indeed he has taken no unlikely means to make them busy with their tongues : for he is this moment upon the open terrace, in the highest public gallantry with my Lady Graveairs. “And to convince the world and me, he said, he was not that tame lover we fancied him, he'd venture to give her music to-night: nay, I heard him, before my face, speak to one of the hautboys to engage the rest, and desired they would all take their directions only from my Lady Graveairs.”

*L. Betty.* My Lady Graveairs! truly I think my lord's very much in the right on't—for my part, Sir Charles, I don't see any thing in this that's so very ridiculous, nor indeed that ought to make me think either the better or the worse of him for't.

*Sir Cha.* Pshaw! pshaw! madam, you and I know 'tis not in his power to renounce you; this is but the poor disguise of a resenting passion, vainly ruffled to

a storm, which the least gentle look from you can reconcile at will, and laugh into a calm again.

*L. Betty.* Indeed, Sir Charles, I shan't give myself that trouble, I believe.

*Sir Cha.* So I told him, madam: are not all your complaints, said I, already owing to her pride; and can you suppose this public defiance of it (which you know you can't make good too) won't incense her more against you?—That's what I'd have, said he, staring wildly; I care not what becomes of me, so I but live to see her piqued at it.

*L. Betty.* Upon my word. I fancy my lord will find himself mistaken—I shan't be piqued, I believe—I must first have a value for the thing I lose, before it piques me: piqued! ha, ha, ha! [*Disordered.*]

*Sir Cha.* Madam, you've said the very thing I urged to him; I know her temper so well, said I, that though she doated on you, if you once stood out against her, she'd sooner burst than shew the least motion of uneasiness.

*L. Betty.* I can assure you, Sir Charles, my lord won't find himself deceived in your opinion——  
piqued!

*Sir Cha.* She has it.

[*Aside.*]

“*L. Easy.* Alas, poor woman! how little do our passions make us!”

*L. Betty.* Not but I would advise him to have a little regard to my reputation in this business; I would have him take heed of publicly affronting me.

*Sir Cha.* Right, madam, that's what I strictly warned him of; for, among friends, whenever the world sees him follow another woman, the malicious tea-tables will be very apt to be free with your ladyship.

*L. Betty.* I'd have him consider that, methinks.

*Sir Cha.* But, alas! madam, 'tis not in his power to think with reason; his mad resentment has destroyed even his principles of common honesty: he considers nothing but a senseless proud revenge, which in his fit of lunacy 'tis impossible that either threats or danger can dissuade him from.

*L. Betty.* What! does he defy me, threaten me! then he shall see, that I have passions too, and know, as well as he, to stir my heart against any pride that dares insult me. Does he suppose I fear him? Fear the little malice of a slighted passion, that my own scorn has stung into a despised resentment! Fear him! O! it provokes me to think he dare have such a thought!

*L. Easy.* Dear creature, don't disorder yourself so.

*L. Betty.* Let me but live to see him once more within my power, and I'll forgive the rest of fortune.

*L. Easy.* "Well, I am certainly very ill-natured; for though I see this news has disturbed my friend, I can't help being pleased with any hopes of my Lady Graveairs being otherwise disposed of." [*Aside.*] My dear, I am afraid you have provoked her a little too far.



*Sir Cha.* Oh! not at all——You shall see—I'll sweeten her, and she'll cool like a dish of tea.

*L. Betty.* I may see him with his complaining face again——

*Sir Cha.* I am sorry, madam, you so wrongly judge of what I've told you; I was in hopes to have stirred your pity, not your anger: I little thought your generosity would punish him for faults, which you yourself resolved he should commit——Yonder he comes, and all the world with him: might I advise you, madam, you should not resent the thing at all——I would not so much as stay to see him in his fault; nay, I'd be the last that heard of it: nothing can sting him more, or so justly punish his folly as your utter neglect of it.

*L. Easy.* Come, dear creature, be persuaded, and go home with me? Indeed it will shew more indifference to avoid him.

*L. Betty.* No, madam, I'll oblige his vanity for once, and stay to let him see how strangely he has piqued me.

*Sir Cha.* [*Aside.*] O not at all to speak of; you had as good part with a little of that pride of yours, or I shall yet make it a very troublesome companion to you. [*Goes from them and whispers Lord Morelove,*

*Enter Lord FOPPINGTON; a little after, Lord MORELOVE, and Lady GRAVEAIRS.*

*L. Fop.* Ladies, your servant——O! we have wanted you beyond reparation——such diversion!

*L. Betty.* Well! my lord! have you seen my Lord Morelove?

*L. Fop.* Seen him! ha, ha, ha, ha!—O! I have such things to tell you, madam—you'll die—

*L. Betty.* O, pray let's hear them, I was never in a better humour to receive them:

*L. Fop.* Hark you.

[*They whisper.*]

*L. Mor.* So, she's engag'd already.

[*To Sir Cha.*]

*Sir Cha.* So much the better; make but a just advantage of my success, and she's undone.

*L. Fop.* } Ha! ha! ha!

*L. Betty.* }

*Sir Cha.* You see already what ridiculous pains she is taking to stir your jealousy, and cover her own.

*L. Fop.* } Ha! ha! ha!

*L. Betty.* }

*L. Mor.* O, never fear me; for, upon my word, it now appears ridiculous even to me.

*Sir Cha.* And, hark you—

[*Whispers L. Mor.*]

*L. Betty.* And so the widow was as full of airs as his lordship?

*Sir Cha.* Only observe that, and it is impossible you can fail.

[*Aside.*]

*L. Mor.* Dear Charles, you have convinced me, and I thank you.

*L. Gra.* My Lord Morelove! What, do you leave us?

*L. Mor.* Ten thousand pardons, madam, I was but just—

*L. Gra.* Nay, nay, no excuses, my lord, so you will but let us have you again.

*Sir Cha.* [*Aside to Lady Graveairs.*] I see you have good humour, madam, when you like your company.

*L. Gra.* And you, I see, for all your mighty thirst of dominion, could stoop to be obedient, if one thought it worth one's while to make you so.

*Sir Cha.* Ha! power would make her an admirable tyrant. [*Aside.*

*L. Easy.* [*Observing Sir Charles and Lady Graveairs.*] So! there's another couple have quarrelled too, I find—Those airs to my Lord Morelove, look as if designed to recover Sir Charles into jealousy: I'll endeavour to join the company, and it may be, that will let me into the secret. [*Aside.*] My Lord Foppington, I vow this is very uncomplaisant, to engross so agreeable a part of the company to yourself.

*Sir Cha.* Nay, my lord, this is not fair, indeed, to enter into secrets among friends!—Ladies, what say you? I think we ought to declare against it.

*L. Betty.* Well, ladies, I ought only to ask your pardon: my lord's excusable, for I would haul him into a corner.

*L. Fop.* I swear 'tis very hard, ho! I observe, two people of extreme condition can no sooner grow particular, but the multitude of both sexes are immediately up, and think their properties invaded——

*L. Bet.* . Odious multitude——

*L. Fop.* Perish the canaille.

*L. Gra.* O, my lord, we women have all reason to be jealous of Lady Betty Modish's power.

*L. Mor.* [*To Lady Betty.*] As the men, madam, all

have of my Lord Foppington; besides, favourites of great merit discourage those of an inferior class for their prince's service; he has already lost you one of your retinue, madam.

*L. Betty.* Not at all, my lord; he has only made room for another: one must sometimes make vacancies, or there could be no preferments.

*L. Easy.* Ha, ha! Ladies' favours, my lord, like places at court, are not always held for life, you know.

*L. Betty.* No, indeed! if they were, the poor fine women would be always used like their wives, and no more minded than the business of the nation.

*L. Easy.* Have a care, madam: an undeserving favourite, has been the ruin of many a prince's empire.

*L. Fop.* Ha, ha! Upon my soul, Lady Betty, we must grow more discreet; for positively if we go on at this rate, we shall have the world throw you under the scandal of constancy; and I shall have all the swords of condition at my throat for a monopolist.

*L. Mor.* O! there's no great fear of that, my lord; though the men of sense give it over, there will be always some idle fellows vain enough to believe their merit may succeed as well as your lordship's.

*L. Betty.* Or if they should not, my lord, cast-lovers, you know, need not fear being long out of employment, while there are so many well-disposed people in the world—There are generally neglected wives, stale maids, or charitable widows, always ready to relieve the necessities of a disappointed passion—and, by the way, hark you, Sir Charles—

[*L. Mor. [Aside.]* So! she's stirr'd, I see; for all her pains to hide it—she would hardly have glanced an affront at a woman she was not piqued at.”

*L. Gra. [Aside.]* That wit was thrown at me, I suppose; but I'll return it.

*L. Betty. [Softly to Sir Charles.]* Pray, how come you all this while to trust your mistress so easily?

*Sir Cha.* One is not so apt, madam, to be alarmed at the liberties of an old acquaintance, as perhaps your ladyship ought to be at the resentment of an hard-used, honourable lover.

*L. Betty.* Suppose I were alarmed, how does that make you easy?

*Sir Cha.* Come, come, be wise at last; my trusting them together, may easily convince you, that, (as I told you before,) I know his addresses to her are only outward, and it will be your fault now, if you let him go on till the world thinks him in earnest; and a thousand busy tongues are set upon malicious enquiries into your reputation.

*L. Betty.* Why, Sir Charles, do you suppose, while he behaves himself as he does, that I won't convince him of my indifference?

*Sir Cha.* But hear me, madam——

*L. Gra. [Aside.]* The air of that whisper looks as if the lady had a mind to be making her peace again; and 'tis possible, his worship's being so busy in the matter too, may proceed as much from his jealousy of my lord with me, as friendship to her; at least I fancy so: therefore I'm resolved to keep her still



piqued, and prevent it, though it be only to gall him  
—Sir Charles, that is not fair to take a privilege  
you just now declared against in my Lord Foppington.

*L. Mor.* Well observed, madam.

*L. Gra.* Besides, it looks so affected to whisper,  
when every body guesses the secret.

*L. Mor.* Ha, ha, ha!

*L. Betty.* O! madam, your pardon in particular:  
but it is possible you may be mistaken: the secrets  
of people that have any regard to their actions, are  
not so soon guessed, as theirs that have made a con-  
fidant of the whole town]

*L. Fop.* Ha, ha, ha!

*L. Gra.* A coquette in her affected airs of disdain  
to a revolted lover, I'm afraid must exceed your la-  
dyship in prudence, not to let the world see, at the  
same time, she'd give her eyes to make her peace with  
him: ha, ha!

*L. Mor.* Ha, ha, ha!

*L. Betty.* 'Twould be a mortification, indeed, if it  
were in the power of a fading widow's charms to pre-  
vent it; and the man must be miserably reduced, sure,  
that could bear to live buried in woollen, or take up  
with the motherly comforts of a swan-skin petticoat.  
Ha, ha!

*L. Fop.* Ha, ha, ha!

*L. Gra.* Widows, it seems, are not so squeamish to  
their interest; they know their own minds, and take  
the man they like, though it happens to be one that a

froward, vain girl has disobliged, and is pining to be friends with.

*L. Mor.* Nay, though it happens to be one that confesses he once was fond of a piece of folly, and afterwards ashamed on't.

*L. Betty.* Nay, my lord, there's no standing against two of you.

*L. Fop.* No, faith, that's odds at tennis, my lord: not but if your ladyship pleases, I'll endeavour to keep your back-hand a little; though upon my soul you may safely set me up at the line: for, knock me down, if ever I saw a rest of wit better played, than that last, in my life—What say you, madam, shall we engage?

*L. Betty.* As you please, my lord.

*L. Fop.* Ha, ha, ha! *Allons! tout de bon jouer, milord.*

*L. Mor.* O, pardon me, sir, I shall never think myself in any thing a match for the lady.

*L. Fop.* To you, madam.

*L. Betty.* That's much, my lord, when the world knows you have been so many years teasing me to play the fool with you.

*L. Fop.* Ah *bien-joué*, Ha, ha, ha!

*L. Mor.* At that game, I confess your ladyship has chosen a much properer person to improve your hand with.

*L. Fop.* To me, madam—My lord, I presume whoever the lady thinks fit to play the fool with, will at

least be able to give as much envy as the wise person that had not wit enough to keep well with her when he was so.

*L. Gra.* O! my lord! Both parties must needs be greatly happy; for I dare swear, neither will have any rivals to disturb them.

*L. Mor.* Ha! ha!

*L. Betty.* None that will disturb them, I dare swear.

*L. Fop.* Ha! ha! ha!

*L. Mor.*

*L. Gra.* } Ha! ha! ha!

*L. Betty.* }

*Sir Cha.* I don't know, gentlefolks—but you are all in extreme good humour, methinks, I hope there's none of it affected.

*L. Easy.* I shou'd be loth to answer for any but my Lord Foppington. [Aside.]

*L. Betty.* Mine is not, I'll swear.

*L. Mor.* Nor mine, I'm sure.

*L. Gra.* Mine's sincere, depend upon't.

*L. Fop.* And may the eternal frowns of the whole sex doubly demme, if mine is not.

*L. Easy.* Well, good people, I am mighty glad to hear it. You have all performed extremely well: but if you please, you shall ev'n give over your wit now, while it is well.

*L. Betty.* [To herself.] Now I see his humour, I'll stand it out, if I were sure to die for't.

*Sir Cha.* You shou'd not have proceeded so far

with my Lord Foppington, after what I had told you.

[*Aside to Lady Betty.*

*L. Betty.* Pray, Sir Charles, give me leave to understand myself a little.

*Sir Cha.* Your pardon, madam. I thought a right understanding wou'd have been for both your interest and reputation.

*L. Betty.* For his, perhaps.

*Sir Cha.* Nay, then, madam, it's time for me to take care of my friend.

*L. Betty.* I never, in the least, doubted your friendship to him in any thing that was to shew yourself my enemy.

*Sir Cha.* Since I see, madam, you have so ungrateful a sense of my Lord Morelove's merit, and my service, I shall never be ashamed of using my power henceforth to keep him entirely out of your ladyship's.

*L. Betty.* Was ever any thing so insolent! I could find in my heart to run the hazard of a downright compliance, if it were only to convince him, that my power, perhaps, is not inferior to his. [To herself.

*L. Easy.* My Lord Foppington, I think you generally lead the company upon these occasions. Pray will you think of some prettier sort of diversion for us than parties and whispers?

*L. Fop.* What say you, ladies, shall we step and see what's done at the basset-table?

*L. Betty.* With all my heart; Lady Easy—

*L. Easy.* I think 'tis the best thing we can do, and

because we won't part to-night, you shall all sup where you dined—What say you, my lord?

*L. Mor.* Your ladyship may be sure of me, madam.

*L. Fop.* Aye! aye! we'll all come.

*L. Easy.* Then pray let's change parties a little. My Lord Foppington, you shall 'squire me.

*L. Fop.* O! you do me honour, madam.

*L. Betty.* My Lord Morelove, pray let me speak with you.

*L. Mor.* Me, madam?

*L. Betty.* If you please, my lord.

*L. Mor.* Ha! that look shot through me. What can this mean? *[Aside.]*

*L. Betty.* This is no proper place to tell you what it is, but there is one thing I'd fain be truly answered in: I suppose you'll be at my Lady Easy's by and by, and if you'll give me leave there——

*L. Mor.* If you please to do me that honour, madam, I shall certainly be there.

*L. Betty.* That's all, my lord.

*L. Mor.* Is not your ladyship for walking?

*L. Betty.* If your lordship dares venture with me.

*L. Mor.* O! madam! *[Taking her hand.]* How my heart dances! what heav'nly music's in her voice, when softened into kindness. *[Aside.]*

*L. Betty.* Ha! his hand trembles——Sir Charles may be mistaken.

*L. Fop.* My Lady Graveairs, you won't let Sir Charles leave us? *[Exeunt.]*

*[Manent Sir Charles and Lady Graveairs.]*



*L. Gra.* No, my lord, we'll follow you——stay a little. [To Sir Charles.

*Sir Cha.* I thought your ladyship designed to follow them.

*L. Gra.* Perhaps I'd speak with you.

*Sir Cha.* But, madam, consider, we shall certainly be observed.

*L. Gra.* Lord, sir, if you think it such a favour.

[Exit hastily.

*Sir Cha.* Is she gone! let her go, &c. [Exit singing.

ACT V. SCENE I.

*Continues. Enter Sir CHARLES and Lord MORELOVE.*

*Sir CHARLES.*

COME a little this way——My Lady Graveairs had an eye upon me as I stole off, and I'm apprehensive will make use of any opportunity to talk with me.

*L. Mor.* O! we are pretty safe here——Well, you were speaking of Lady Betty.

*Sir Cha.* Aye, my lord——I say, notwithstanding all this sudden change of her behaviour, I wou'd not have you yet be too secure of her: “for, between  
“you and I, since I told you, I have professed my-  
“self an open enemy to her power with you, 'tis not  
“impossible but this new air of good humour may

"very much proceed from a little woman's pride, of  
"convincing me you are not yet out of her power.

"*L. Mor.* Not unlikely. But still, can we make  
"no advantage of it?

"*Sir Cha.* That's what I have been thinking of—  
"look you—Death! my Lady Graveairs!

"*L. Mor.* Ha! she will have audience, I find.

"*Sir Cha.* There's no avoiding her—the truth  
"is, I have owed her a little good-nature a great  
"while—I see there is but one way of getting rid  
"of her—I must even appoint her a day of pay-  
"ment at last." If you'll step into my lodgings, my  
"lord, I'll just give her an answer, and be with you in  
"a moment.

*L. Mor.* Very well, I'll stay there for you.

[Exit Lord Morelove.

*Enter Lady GRAVEAIRS on the other side.*

*L. Gra.* Sir Charles!

*Sir Cha.* Come, come, no more of these reproach-  
ful looks; you'll find, madam, I have deserved bet-  
ter of you than your jealousy imagines—Is it a fault  
to be tender of your reputation?—fye, fye—This  
may be a proper time to talk, and of my contriving  
too—you see I just now shook off my Lord More-  
love on purpose.

*L. Gra.* May I believe you?

*Sir Cha.* Still doubting my fidelity, and mistaking  
my discretion for want of good-nature.

"*L. Gra.* Don't think me troublesome—For I

“ confess 'tis death to think of parting with you :  
 “ since the world sees for you I have neglected friends  
 “ and reputation, have stood the little insults of dis-  
 “ dainful prudes, that envied me perhaps your friend-  
 “ ship ; have borne the freezing looks of near and  
 “ general acquaintance—Since this is so—don't let  
 “ them ridicule me too, and say my foolish vanity  
 “ undid me ? Don't let them point at me as a cast  
 “ mistress ?

“ *Sir Cha.* You wrong me, to suppose the thought :  
 “ you'll have better of me when we meet :” When  
 shall you be at leisure ?

*L. Gra.* I confess I would see you once again ; if  
 what I have more to say prove ineffectual, perhaps it  
 may convince me then, 'tis my interest to part with  
 you—Can you come to-night.

*Sir Cha.* You know we have company, and I'm  
 afraid they'll stay too late—Can't it be before sup-  
 per ?—What's o'clock now ?

*L. Gra.* It's almost six.

*Sir Cha.* At seven then be sure of me, till when I'd  
 have you go back to the ladies, to avoid suspicion,  
 and about that time have the vapours.

*L. Gra.* May I depend upon you ? [Exit.

*Sir Cha.* Depend on every thing—A very trouble-  
 some business this—Send me once fairly rid on't—if  
 ever I'm caught in an honourable affair again!—A  
 debt now that a little ready civility, and away, would  
 satisfy, a man might bear with ; but to have a rent-  
 charge upon one's good-nature, with an unconscion-

able long scroll of arrears too, that would eat out the profits of the best estate in Christendom—ah—intolerable! Well! I'll even to my lord, and shake off the thoughts on't. [Exit.

“ *Enter Lady BETTY and Lady EASY.*

“ *L. Betty.* I observe, my dear, you have usually  
“ this great fortune at play, it were enough to make  
“ one suspect your good luck with an husband.

“ *L. Easy.* Truly I don't complain of my fortune  
“ either way.

“ *L. Betty.* Pr'ythee tell me, you are often advising  
“ me to it; are there those real comfortable advantages in marriage, that our old aunts and grandmothers would persuade us of?

“ *L. Easy.* Upon my word, if I had the worst husband in the world, I should still think so.

“ *L. Betty.* Ay, but then the hazard of not having  
“ a good one, my dear.

“ *L. Easy.* You may have a good one, I dare say,  
“ if you don't give airs till you spoil him.

“ *L. Betty.* Can there be the same dear, full delight  
“ in giving ease as pain? Oh, my dear, the thought  
“ of parting with one's power is insupportable.

“ *L. Easy.* And the keeping it, till it dwindles into  
“ no power at all, is most ruefully foolish.

“ *L. Betty.* But still to marry before one's heartily  
“ in love——

“ *L. Easy.* Is not half so formidable a calamity——  
“ but if I have any eyes, my dear, you'll run no great

"hazard of that in venturing on my Lord Morelove  
 "——You don't know, perhaps, that within this half  
 "hour the tone of your voice is strangely softened to  
 "him: ha! ha! ha!

"*L. Betty.* My dear, you are positively, one or  
 "other, the most censorious creature in the world—  
 "and so I see it's in vain to talk with you—Pray,  
 "will you go back to the company?

"*L. Easy.* Ah! Poor Lady Betty! [Exeunt.]

SCENE II.

*Changes to Sir CHARLES's Lodgings. Enter Sir  
 CHARLES and Lord MORELOVE.*

*L. Mor.* Charles, you have transported me! you  
 have made my part in the scene so very easy too, 'tis  
 impossible I should fail in it.

*Sir Cha.* That's what I considered; for now the  
 more you throw yourself into her power, the more I  
 shall be able to force her into yours.

*L. Mor.* After all, (begging the ladies' pardon)  
 your fine women, like bullies, are only stout when  
 they know their men: a man of an honest courage  
 may fright 'em into any thing! Well, I am fully in-  
 structed, and will about it instantly—Won't you go  
 along with me?

*Sir Cha.* That may not be so proper;—besides, I  
 have a little business upon my hands.



*L. Mor.* Oh, your servant, sir—Good bye to you—you shan't stir.

*Sir Cha.* My lord, your servant—[*Exit Lord Mor.*] So! now to dispose myself 'till 'tis time to think of my Lady Graveairs—Umph! I have no great maw to that business, methinks—I don't find myself in humour enough to come up to the civil things that are usually expected in the making up of an old quarrel—[*Edging crosses the stage.*] There goes a warmer temptation by half;—Ha! into my wife's bed-chamber too—I question if the jade has any great business there!—I have a fancy she has only a mind to be taking the opportunity of no body's being at home, to make her peace with me—let me see—aye, I shall have time enough to go to her ladyship afterwards—Besides, I want a little sleep, I find—Your young fops may talk of their women of quality—but to me now, there's a strange agreeable convenience in a creature one is not obliged to say much to upon these occasions. [*Going.*]

*Enter EDGING.*

*Edg.* Did you call me, sir?

*Sir Cha.* Ha! all's right—[*Aside.*]—Yes, madam, I did call you. [*Sits down.*]

*Edg.* What would you please to have, sir?

*Sir Cha.* Havel! Why, I would have you grow a good girl, and know when you are well used, hussy.

*Edg.* Sir, I don't complain of any thing, not I.

*Sir Cha.* Well, don't be uneasy—I am not angry with you now—Come and kiss me.

*Edg.* Lard, sir!

*Sir Cha.* Don't be a fool, now—Come hither.

*Edg.* Pshaw—

[*Goes to him.*]

*Sir Cha.* No wry face—so—sit down. I won't have you look grave neither, let me see you smile, you jade, you.

*Edg.* Ha! ha!

[*Laughs and blushes.*]

*Sir Cha.* Ah! you melting rogue.

*Edg.* Come, don't you be at your tricks now—Lard! can't you sit still and talk with one! I am sure there's ten times more love in that, and fifty times the satisfaction, people may say what they will.

*Sir Cha.* Well! now you're good, you shall have your own way—I am going to lie down in the next room; and, since you love a little chat, come and throw my night-gown over me, and you shall talk me to sleep.

[*Exit Sir Charles.*]

*Edg.* Yes, sir—for all his way, I see he likes me still.

[*Exit after him.*]

### SCENE III.

*Changes to the Terrace. Enter Lady BETTY, Lady EASY, and Lord MORELOVE.*

*L. Mor.* Nay, madam, there you are too severe upon him; for, bating now and then a little vanity,

my Lord Foppington does not want wit sometimes to make him a very tolerable woman's man.

*L. Betty.* But such eternal vanity grows tiresome.

*L. Easy.* Come, if he were not so loose in his morals, his vanity methinks might be easily excused, considering how much 'tis in fashion : for, pray observe what's half the conversation of most of the fine young people about town, but a perpetual affectation of appearing foremost in the knowledge of manners, new modes, and scandal? and in that I don't see any body comes up to him.

*L. Mor.* Nor I, indeed——and here he comes——Pray, madam, let's have a little more of him ; nobody shews him to more advantage than your ladyship.

*L. Bet.* Nay, with all my heart ; you'll second me, my lord.

*L. Mor.* Upon occasion, madam——

*L. Easy.* Engaging upon parties, my lord?

[*Aside, and smiling to L. Mor.*

*Enter Lord FOPPINGTON.*

*L. Fop.* So, ladies ! what's the affair now ?

*L. Bet.* Why, you were, my lord ! I was allowing you a great many good qualities, but lady Easy says you are a perfect hypocrite : and that whatever airs you give yourself to the women, she's confident you value no woman in the world equal to your own lady.

*L. Fop.* You see, madam, how I am scandalized upon your account. But it's so natural for a prude

to be malicious, when a man endeavours to be well with any body but herself; did you ever observe she was piqued at that before? ha! ha!

*L. Bet.* I'll swear you are a provoking creature.

*L. Fop.* Let's be more familiar upon't, and give her disorder! ha! ha!

*L. Bet.* Ha! ha! ha!

*L. Fop.* Stap my breath, but lady Easy is an admirable discoverer—Marriage is indeed a prodigious security of one's inclination: a man's likely to take a world of pains in an employment, where he can't be turn'd out for his idleness.

*L. Bet.* I vow, my lord, that's vastly generous to all the fine women; you are for giving them a despotic power in love, I see, to reward and punish as they think fit.

*L. Fop.* Ha! ha! Right, madam, what signifies beauty without power? And a fine woman when she's married makes as ridiculous a figure, as a beaten general marching out of a garrison.

*L. Easy.* I'm afraid, Lady Betty, the greatest danger in your use of power, would be from a too heedless liberality; you would more mind the man than his merit.

*L. Fop.* Piqued again, by all that's fretful—Well, certainly to give envy is a pleasure inexpressible. *[To Lady Betty.]*

*L. Bet.* Ha! ha!

*L. Easy.* Does not she show him well, my lord? *[Aside to L. Mor.]*

*L. K.*

*L. Mor.* Perfectly, and me to myself—For now I almost blush to think I ever was uneasy at him.

[*To L. Easy.*

*L. Fop.* Lady Easy, I ask ten thousand pardons, I'm afraid I am rude all this while.

*L. Easy.* Oh, not at all, my lord, you are always good company, when you please: not but in some things, indeed, you are apt to be like other fine gentlemen, a little too loose in your principles.

*L. Fop.* Oh, madam, never to the offence of the ladies; I agree in any community with them; nobody is a more constant churchman, when the fine women are there.

*L. Easy.* Oh fye, my lord, you ought not to go for their sakes at all. And I wonder, you that are for being such a good husband of your virtues, are not afraid of bringing your prudence into a lampoon or a play.

*L. Betty.* Lampoons and plays, madam, are only things to be laughed at.

*L. Fop.* Odsol ladies, the court's coming home, I see; shall not we make our bows?

*L. Betty.* Oh, by all means.

*L. Easy.* Lady Betty, I must leave you: for I am obliged to write letters, and I know you won't give me time after supper.

*L. Betty.* Well, my dear, I'll make a short visit and be with you, [*Exit Lady Easy.*] Pray what's become of my Lady Graveairs?

*L. Mor.* Oh, I believe she's gone home, madam, she seemed not to be very well.



*L. Fop.* And where's Sir Charles, my lord?

*L. Mor.* I left him at his own lodgings.

*L. Betty.* He's upon some ramble, I'm afraid.

*L. Fop.* Nay, as for that matter, a man may ramble at home sometimes—But here come the chaises, we must make a little more haste, madam. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE IV.

*Changes to Sir CHARLES's Lodgings. Enter Lady EASY and a Servant.*

*L. Easy.* Is your master come home?

*Serv.* Yes, madam.

*L. Easy.* Where is he?

*Serv.* I believe, madam, he's laid down to sleep.

*L. Easy.* Where's Edging? Bid her get me some wax and paper—stay, it's no matter, now I think on it—there's some above upon my toilette.

[*Exeunt severally.*]

SCENE V.

*Opens and discovers Sir CHARLES without his Periwig, and EDGING by him, both asleep in two easy Chairs. Then enter Lady EASY, who starts and trembles, some time unable to speak.*

*L. Easy.* Ha! protect me, virtue, patience, reason! Teach me to bear this killing sight, or let

Me think my dreaming senses are deceiv'd !  
For sure a sight like this might raise the arm  
Of duty ev'n to the breast of love ! At least  
I'll throw this vizer of my patience off :  
Now wake him in his guilt,  
And barefac'd front him with my wrongs.  
I'll talk to him till he blushes, nay, till he—  
Frowns on me, perhaps—and then  
I'm lost again—The ease of a few tears  
Is all that's left to me—  
And duty too forbids me to insult,  
When I have vow'd obedience—Perhaps  
The fault's in me, and nature has not form'd  
Me with the thousand little requisites  
That warm the heart to love—  
Somewhere there is a fault—  
But Heav'n best knows what both of us deserve :  
Ha ! bare headed, and in so sound a sleep !  
Who knows, while thus expos'd to th' unwholesome air,  
But Heav'n offended may o'ertake his crime,  
And, in some languishing distemper, leave him  
A severe example of its violated laws—  
Forbid it mercy, and forbid it love.  
This may prevent it.

*[Takes a Steinhirk off her neck, and lays it gently  
on his head.]*

And if he should wake offended at my too busy care,  
let my heart-breaking patience, duty, and my fond  
affection plead my pardon. *[Exit.]*

*[After she has been out some time, a bell rings ;  
Edging wakes and stirs Sir Charles.]*

Edg. Oh!

Sir Cha. How now! what's the matter?

Edg. Oh, bless my soul, my lady's come home.

Sir Cha. Go, go then. [Bell rings.]

Edg. Oh, lud! my head's in such a condition too.  
[Runs to the glass.] I am coming, madam—Oh, lud! here's no powder neither—Here, madam. [Exit.]

Sir Cha. How now? [Feeling the Steinkirk upon his head.] What's this? How came it here? [Puts on his wig.] Did not I see my wife wear this to-day?—  
“Death! she cann't have been here, sure—It could  
“not be jealousy that brought her home—for my  
“coming was accidental—so too, I fear, was hers—  
“How careless have I been?—not to secure the door  
“neither—'Twas foolish—It must be so! She cer-  
“tainly has seen me here sleeping with her woman:  
“—if so, how low an hypocrite to her must that sight  
“have proved me?—The thought has made me  
“despicable ev'n to myself—How mean a vice is  
“lying, and how often have these empty pleasures  
“lulled my honour and my conscience to lethargy,  
“while I grossly have abused her, poorly skulking  
“behind a thousand falsehoods?—Now I reflect, this  
“has not been the first of her discoveries”——How  
contemptible a figure must I have made to her?—  
A crowd of recollected circumstances confirms me  
now, she has been long acquainted with my follies,  
and yet with what amazing prudence has she borne  
the secret pangs of injured love, and wore an ever-  
lasting smile to me? This asks a little thinking——

something should be done—I'll see her instantly, and be resolved from her behaviour. [Exit.

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SCENE VI.

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*Changes to another Room. Enter Lady EASY and EDGING.*

*L. Easy.* Where have you been, Edging?

*Edg.* Been, madam! I—I—I—I came as soon as I and you ring, madam.

*L. Easy.* How guilt confounds her! but she's below my thought—Fetch my last new sack hither—I have a mind to alter it a little—make haste.

*Edg.* Yes, madam—I see she does not suspect any thing. [Exit.

*L. Easy.* Heigh ho! [*Sitting down.*] I had forgot—but I'm unfit for writing now—'Twas an hard conflict—yet it's a joy to think it over: a secret pride, to tell my heart my conduct has been just—How low are vicious minds that offer injuries, how much superior innocence that bears 'em.—Still there's a pleasure ev'n in the melancholy of a quiet conscience—Away, my fears, it is not yet impossible—for while his human nature is not quite shook off, I ought not to despair.

*Re-enter EDGING, with a Sack.*

*Edg.* Here's the sack, madam.

*L. Easy.* So, sit down there—and, let me see—here—rip off all that silver.

*Edg.* Indeed, I always thought it would become your ladyship better without it—But now suppose, madam, you carry'd another row of gold round the scollops, and then you take and lay this silver plain all along the gathers, and your ladyship will perfectly see, it will give the thing ten thousand times another air.

*L. Easy.* Pr'ythee don't be impertinent; do as I bid you.

*Edg.* Nay, madam, with all my heart, your ladyship may do as you please.

*L. Easy.* This creature grows so confident, and I dare not part with her, lest he should think it jealousy. [*Aside.*]

*Enter Sir CHARLES.*

*Sir Cha.* So, my dear! What, at work! how are you employed, pray?

*L. Easy.* I was thinking to alter this sack here.

*Sir Cha.* What's amiss? Methinks it's very pretty.

*Edg.* Yes, sir, it's pretty enough for that matter, but my lady has a mind it should be proper too.

*Sir Cha.* Indeed!

*L. Easy.* I fancy plain gold and black would become me better.

*Sir Cha.* That's a grave thought, my dear.

*Edg.* O, dear sir, not at all, my lady's much in the



right; I am sure, as it is, it's fit for nothing but a girl.

*Sir Cha.* Leave the room.

*Edg.* Lord, sir! I can't stir—I must stay to—

*Sir Cha.* Go— [Angrily.

*Edg.* [Throwing down the work hastily, and crying, *aside.*] If ever I speak to him again, I'll be burned.

[Exit *Edging*.

*Sir Cha.* Sit still, my dear,—I came to talk with you—and which you well may wonder at, what I have to say is of importance too, but 'tis in order to my hereafter always talking kindly to you.

*L. Easy.* Your words were never disoblising, nor can I charge you with a look that ever had the appearance of being unkind.

*Sir Cha.* The perpetual spring of your good humour lets me draw no merit from what I have appeared to be, which makes me curious now to know your thoughts of what I really am: and never having asked you this before, it puzzles me: nor can I (my strange negligence considered) reconcile to reason your first thought of venturing upon marriage with me.

*L. Easy.* I never thought it such a hazard.

*Sir Cha.* How could a woman of your restraint in principles, sedateness, sense, and tender disposition, propose to lead an happy life with one (now I reflect) that hardly took an hour's pains, ev'n before marriage, to appear but what I am: a loose, unheeded wretch, absent in all I do, civil, and as often rude without design, unseasonably thoughtful, easy to a

fault, and, in my best of praise, but carelessly good-natured? How shall I reconcile your temper with having made so strange a choice?

*L. Easy.* Your own words may answer you—Your having never seemed to be but what you really were; and through that carelessness of temper there still shone forth to me an undesigning honesty, I always doubted of in smoother faces: thus, while I saw you took least pains to win me, you pleased and woo'd me most: nay, I have thought, that such a temper could never be deliberately unkind: or, at the worst, I knew that errors from the want of thinking might be borne; at least, when probably one moment's serious thought would end 'em: these were my worst of fears, and these, when weighed by growing love against my solid hopes, were nothing.

*Sir Cha.* My dear, your understanding startles me, and justly calls my own in question: I blush to think I've worn so bright a jewel in my bosom, and, till this hour, have scarce been curious once to look upon its lustre.

*L. Easy.* You set too high a value on the common qualities of an easy wife.

*Sir Cha.* Virtues, like benefits, are double, when concealed: and I confess, I yet suspect you of an higher value far than I have spoke you.

*L. Easy.* I understand you not.

*Sir Cha.* I'll speak more plainly to you—be free and tell me—Where did you leave this handkerchief?

*L. Easy.* Ha!

"*Sir Cha.* What is it you start at? You hear the question.

"*L. Easy.* What shall I say? my fears confound me."

*Sir Cha.* Be not concerned, my dear, be easy in the truth, and tell me.

*L. Easy.* I cannot speak—and I could wish you'd not oblige me to it—'tis the only thing I ever yet refused you—and though I want reason for my will, let me not answer you.

*Sir Cha.* Your will then be a reason; and since I see you are so generously tender of reproaching me, it is fit I should be easy in my gratitude, and make what ought to be my shame my joy; let me be therefore pleased to tell you now, your wondrous conduct has waked me to a sense of your disquiet past, and resolution never to disturb it more—And (not that I offer it as a merit, but yet in blind compliance to my will) let me beg you would immediately discharge your woman.

*L. Easy.* Alas! I think not of her—O, my dear, distract me not with this excess of goodness.

[Weeping.

*Sir Cha.* Nay, praise me not, lest I reflect how little I have deserved it; "I see you are in pain to give me this confusion."—Come, I will not shock your softness by my untimely blush for what is past, but rather sooth you to a pleasure at my sense of joy, for my recovered happiness to come. Give then to my new-born love what name you please, it cannot,

shall not be too kind: O! it cannot be too soft for what my soul swells up with emulation to deserve—Receive me then entire at last, and take what yet no woman ever truly had, my conquered heart.

*L. Easy.* “O the soft treasure! O the dear reward “of long deserving love”—Now am I blest indeed to see you kind without the expence of pain in being so, to make you mine with easiness: thus! thus to have you mine is something more than happiness, ’tis double life, and madness of abounding joy. But it was a pain intolerable to give you a confusion.

*Sir Cha.* O thou engaging virtue! But I am too slow in doing justice to thy love: I know thy softness will refuse me; but remember, I insist upon it—let thy woman be discharged this minute.

*L. Easy.* No, my dear, think me not so low in faith, to fear, that, after what you have said, it will ever be in her power to do me future injury: when I can conveniently provide for her, I’ll think on it: but to discharge her now, might let her guess at the occasion; and methinks I would have our difference, like our endearments, be equally a secret to our servants.

*Sir Cha.* Still my superior every way—be it as you have better thought—Well, my dear, now I’ll confess a thing that was not in your power to accuse me of; to be short, I own this creature is not the only one I have been to blame with.

*L. Easy.* I know she is not, and was always less concerned to find it so, for constancy in errors might have been fatal to me.

*Sir Cha.* What is it you know, my dear ?

[*Surprised.*

*L. Easy.* Come, I'm not afraid to accuse you now  
—my Lady Graveairs—Your carelessness, my  
dear, let all the world know it, and it would have  
been hard indeed, had it been only to me a secret.

*Sir Cha.* My dear, I will ask no more questions,  
for fear of being more ridiculous; I do confess, I  
thought my discretion there had been a master-piece  
—How contemptible must I have looked all this  
while !

*L. Easy.* You shan't say so.

*Sir Cha.* Well, to let you see I had some shame, as  
well as nature in me, I had writ this to my Lady  
Graveairs upon my first discovering that you knew I  
had wronged you: read it.

*L. Easy.* [*Reads.*] ‘Something has happened, that  
prevents the visit I intended you; and  
‘I could gladly wish, you never would  
‘reproach me if I tell you, ’tis utterly  
‘inconvenient that I should ever see you  
‘more.’

This indeed was more than I had merited.

*Enter a Servant.*

*Sir Cha.* Who is there? Here—Step with this to  
my Lady Graveairs.

[*Seals the letter, and gives it to the servant.*

*Serv.* Yes, sir—Madam, my Lady Betty's come.

*L. Easy.* I'll wait on her.



*Sir Cha.* My dear, I am thinking there may be other things my negligence may have wronged you in; "but be assured as I discover, all shall be corrected."—Is there any part or circumstance in your fortune that I can change or yet make easier to you?

*L. Easy.* None, my dear, your good-nature never stinted me in that; and now, methinks, I have less occasion there than ever.

*Re-enter Servant.*

*Serv.* Sir, my Lord Morelove's come.

*Sir Cha.* I am coming—I think I told you of the design we had laid against Lady Betty.

*L. Easy.* You did, and I should be pleased to be myself concerned in it.

*Sir Cha.* I believe we may employ you: I know he waits for me with impatience. But, my dear, won't you think me tasteless to the joy you have given me, to suffer at this time any concern but you to employ my thoughts?

*L. Easy.* Seasons must be obeyed; and since I know your friend's happiness depending, I could not taste my own, should you neglect it.

*Sir Cha.* Thou easy sweetness—O! what a waste on thy neglected love, has my unthinking brain committed! but time and future thrift of tenderness shall yet repair it all. The hours will come when this soft

L

gliding stream that swells my heart, uninterrupted shall renew its course——

*And like the ocean after ebb, shall move  
With constant force of due returning love.* [Exeunt.

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SCENE VII.

*Changes to another Room. Re-enter Lady EASY and Lady BETTY.*

*L. Betty.* You have been in tears, my dear, and yet you look pleased too.

*L. Easy.* You will pardon me, if I cannot let you into circumstances: but be satisfied, Sir Charles has made me happy, even to a pain of joy.

*L. Betty.* Indeed I am truly glad of it, though I am sorry to find that any one who has generosity enough to do you justice, should unprovoked be so great an enemy to me.

*L. Easy.* Sir Charles your enemy!

*L. Betty.* My dear, you will pardon me if I always thought him so, but now I am convinced of it.

*L. Easy.* In what, pray? I cannot think you will find him so.

*L. Betty.* O! madam, it has been his whole business of late to make an utter breach between my Lord Morelove and me.

*L. Easy.* That may be owing to your usage of my lord: perhaps he thought it would not disoblige you. I am confident you are mistaken in him.

*L. Betty.* O! I don't use to be out in things of this nature; I can see well enough: but I shall be able to tell you more when I have talked with my lord.

*L. Easy.* Here he comes; and because you shall talk with him—No excuses—for positively I will leave you together.

*L. Betty.* Indeed, my dear, I desire you will stay then; for I know you think now, that I have a mind to——

*L. Easy.* To—to——ha, ha, ha!

[*Going.*]

*L. Betty.* Well! remember this.

*Enter Lord MORELOVE.*

*L. Mor.* I hope I don't fright you away, madam?

*L. Easy.* Not at all, my lord; but I must beg your pardon for a moment; I will wait upon you immediately.

[*Exit.*]

*L. Betty.* My Lady Easy gone?

*L. Mor.* Perhaps, madam, in friendship to you; she thinks I may have deserved the coldness you of late have shewn to me, and was willing to give you this opportunity to convince me, you have not done it without just grounds and reason.

*L. Betty.* How handsomely does he reproach me! but I cannot bear that he should think I know it——

[*Aside.*] My lord, whatever has passed between you and me, I dare swear that could not be her thoughts

at this time : for when two people have appeared professed enemies, she cannot but think one will as little care to give, as the other to receive, a justification of their actions.

*L. Mor.* Passion indeed often does repeated injuries on both sides, but I don't remember in my heat of error I ever yet professed myself your enemy.

*L. Betty.* My lord, I shall be very free with you—I confess I do not think now I have a greater enemy in the world.

*L. Mor.* If having long loved you to my own disquiet, be injurious, I am contented then to stand the foremost of your enemies.

*L. Betty.* O! my lord, there's no great fear of your being my enemy that way, I dare say——

*L. Mor.* There is no other way my heart can bear to offend you now, and I foresee in that it will persist to my undoing.

*L. Betty.* Fie, fie, my lord, we know where your heart is well enough.

*L. Mor.* My conduct has indeed deserved this scorn, and therefore 'tis but just I should submit to your resentment, and beg (though I am assured in vain) for pardon. [Kneels.

*Enter Sir CHARLES.*

*Sir Cha.* How, my lord! [Lord Mor. rises.

*L. Betty.* Ha! He here! This was unlucky. [Aside.

*L. Mor.* O, pity my confusion! [To L. Betty."

*Sir Cha.* I am sorry to see you can so soon forget

yourself: methinks the insults you have borne from that lady, by this time should have warned you into a disgust of her regardless principles.

*L. Mor.* Hold, Sir Charles! while you and I are friends, I desire you would speak with honour of this lady—'Tis sufficient I have no complaint against her, and—

*L. Betty.* My lord, I beg you would resent this thing no farther: an injury like this, is better punished with our contempt; apparent malice should only be laughed at.

*Sir Cha.* Ha, ha! the old resource. Offers of any hopes to delude him from his resentment, "and then "as the Grand Monarque did with Cavalier:" and then you are sure to keep your word with him.

*L. Betty.* Sir Charles, to let you know how far I am above your little spleen, my lord, your hand from this hour——

*Sir Cha.* Pshaw! pshaw! all design! all pique! mere artifice and disappointed woman.

*L. Betty.* Look you, sir, not that I doubt my lord's opinion of me; yet——

*Sir Cha.* Look you, madam, in short, your word has been too often taken, to let you make up quarrels, as you used to do, with a soft look, and a fair promise you never intended to keep.

*L. Betty.* Was ever such insolence! He won't give me leave to speak.

*L. Mor.* Sir Charles!

*L. Betty.* No, pray, my lord, have patience; and



since his malice seems to grow particular, I dare his worst, and urge him to the proof on't: Pray, sir, wherein can you charge me with breach of promise to my lord?

*Sir Cha.* Death! you won't deny it? How often, to piece up a quarrel, have you appointed him to visit you alone; and though you have promised to see no other company the whole day, when he was come he has found you among the laugh of noisy fops, co-quets, and coxcombs, dissolutely gay, while your full eyes ran over with transport of their flattery, and your own vain power of pleasing? How often, I say, have you been known to throw away, at least, four hours of your good humour upon such wretches; and the minute they were gone, grew only dull to him, sunk into a distasteful spleen, complained you had talked yourself into the head-ach, and then indulged upon the dear delight of seeing him in pain: and by that time you had stretched and gaped him heartily out of patience, of a sudden most importantly remember you had outsat your appointment with my Lady Fiddle-faddle; and immediately order your coach to the park.

*L. Betty.* Yet, sir, have you done?

*Sir Cha.* No——though this might serve to shew the nature of your principles: but the noble conquest you have gained at last over defeated sense of reputation too, has made your fame immortal.

*L. Mor.* How, sir?

*L. Betty.* My reputation?

*Sir Cha.* Aye, madam, your reputation—My lord, if I advance a falsehood, then resent it.—I say, your reputation——It has been your life's whole pride of late to be the common toast of every public table, vain even in the infamous addresses of a married man, my Lord Foppington; let that be reconciled with reputation, I will now shake hands with shame, and bow me to the low contempt which you deserve from him; not but I suppose you will yet endeavour to recover him. Now you find ill usage in danger of losing your conquest, 'tis possible you will stop at nothing to preserve it.

*L. Betty.* Sir Charles—

*[Walks disordered, and he after her]*

*Sir Cha.* I know your vanity is so voracious, it will even wound itself to feed itself; offer him a blank, perhaps to fill up with hopes of what nature he pleases, and part even with your pride to keep him.

*L. Betty.* Sir Charles, I have not deserved this of you.

*[Bursting into tears.]*

*Sir Cha.* Ah! true woman, drop him a soft dissembling tear, and then his just resentment must be hushed of course.

*L. Mor.* O Charles! I can bear no more, those tears are too reproaching.

*Sir Cha.* Hist, for your life! *[Aside, and then loud.]* My lord, if you believe her, you are undone; the very next sight of my Lord Foppington, would make her yet forswear all that she can promise.

*L. Betty.* My Lord Foppington! Is that the mighty crime that must condemn me then? You know I used him but as a tool of my resentment, which you yourself, by a pretended friendship to us both, most artfully provoked me to——

*L. Mor.* Hold, I conjure you, madam, I want not this conviction.

*L. Betty.* Send for him this minute, and you and he shall both be witnesses of the contempt and detestation I have for any forward hopes his vanity may have given him, or your malice would insinuate.

*Sir Cha.* Death! you would as soon eat fire, as soon part with your luxurious taste of folly, as dare to own the half of this before his face, or any one, that would make you blush to deny it to——Here comes my wife, now, we shall see——Ha! and my Lord Foppington with her——Now! now, we shall see this mighty proof of your sincerity——Now! my lord, you'll have a warning sure, and henceforth know me for your friend indeed——

*Enter Lady EASY, and Lord FOPPINGTON.*

*L. Easy.* In tears, my dear! what's the matter?

*L. Betty.* O, my dear, all I told you is true: Sir Charles has shewn himself so inveterably my enemy, that if I believed I deserved but half his hate, 'twould make me hate myself.

*L. Fop.* Hark you, Charles, pr'ythee what is this business?

*Sir Cha.* Why yours, my lord, for aught I know—I have made such a breach betwixt them—I cannot promise much for the courage of a woman; but if hers holds, I am sure it is wide enough; you may enter ten abreast, my lord.

*L. Fop.* Say'st thou so, Charles? then I hold six to four, I am the first man in the town.

*L. Easy.* Sure there must be some mistake in this: I hope he has not made my lord your enemy.

*L. Betty.* I know not what he has done.

*L. Mor.* Far be that thought! alas! I am too much in fear myself, that what I have this day committed, advised by his mistaken friendship, may have done my love irreparable prejudice.

*L. Betty.* No, my lord, since I perceive his little arts have not prevailed upon your good-nature to my prejudice, I am bound in gratitude, in duty to myself, and to the confession you have made, my lord, to acknowledge now, I have been to blame too.

*L. Mor.* Hal is it possible; can you own so much? "O my transported heart!"

*L. Betty.* He says I have taken pleasure in seeing you uneasy—I own it—but 'twas when that uneasiness I thought proceeded from your love; and if you did love—'twill not be much to pardon it.

*L. Mor.* O let my soul, thus bending to your power, adore this soft descending goodness.

*L. Betty.* And since the giddy woman's slights I

have shewn you too often, have been public, 'tis fit at last the amends and reparation should be so: therefore, what I offered to Sir Charles, I now repeat before this company, my utter detestation of any past or future gallantry, that has or shall be offered by me, to your uneasiness.

*L. Mor.* O be less generous, or teach me to deserve it—Now blush, Sir Charles, at your injurious accusation.

*L. Fop.* Ah! *Pardi, Voila quelque chose d'extraordinaire.*

*L. Betty.* As for my Lord Foppington, I owe him thanks for having been so friendly an instrument of our reconciliation; for though in the little outward gallantry I received from him, I did not immediately trust him with my design in it, yet I have a better opinion of his understanding, than to suppose he could mistake it.

*L. Fop.* I am struck dumb with the deliberation of her assurance; and do not positively remember, that the *nonchalance* of my temper ever had so bright an occasion to shew itself before.

*L. Betty.* My lord, I hope, you will pardon the freedom I have taken with you.

*L. Fop.* O, madam, do not be under the confusion of an apology upon my account; for in cases of this nature, I am never disappointed, but when I find a lady of the same mind two hours together—Madam, I have lost a thousand fine women in my time;



but never had the ill manners to be out of humour with any one for refusing me, since I was born.

*L. Betty.* My lord, that's a very prudent temper.

*L. Fop.* Madam, to convince you that I am in an universal peace with mankind, since you own I have so far contributed to your happiness, give me leave to have the honour of completing it, by joining your hand where you have already offered up your inclination.

*L. Betty.* My lord, that's a favour I can't refuse you.

*L. Mor.* Generous, indeed, my lord.

[*Lord Foppington joins their hands.*]

*L. Fop.* And, stap my breath, if ever I was better pleased since my first entrance into human nature.

*Sir Cha.* How now, my lord! what! throw up the cards before you have lost the game?

*L. Fop.* Look you, Charles, 'tis true, I did design to have played with her alone: but he that will keep well with the ladies, must sometimes be content to make one at a pool with them; and since I know I must engage her in my turn, I don't see any great odds in letting him take the first game with her.

*Sir Cha.* Wisely considered, my lord.

*L. Betty.* And now, Sir Charles——

*Sir Cha.* And now, madam, I'll save you the trouble of a long speech; and, in one word, confess that every thing that I have done in regard to you this day was purely artificial—I saw there was no way to

secure you to my Lord Morelove, but by alarming your pride with the danger of losing him: and since the success must have by this time convinced you, that in love nothing is more ridiculous than an over-acted aversion; I am sure you won't take it ill, if we at last congratulate your good-nature, by heartily laughing at the fright we had put you in: ha! ha! ha!

*L. Easy.* Ha! ha! ha!

*L. Betty.* Why——well I declare it now, I hate you worse than ever.

*Sir Cha.* Ha! ha! ha! And was it afraid they would take away it's love from it——Poor Lady Betty! ha! ha!

*L. Easy.* My dear, I beg your pardon; but it is impossible not to laugh when one is so heartily pleased.

*L. Fop.* Really, madam, I am afraid the humour of the company will draw me into your displeasure too; but if I were to expire this moment, my last breath would positively go out with a laugh. Ha! ha! ha!

*L. Betty.* Nay, I have deserved it all, that's the truth on't—but I hope, my lord, you were not in this design against me.

*L. Mor.* As a proof, madam, I am inclined never to deceive you more—I do confess I had my share in it.

*L. Betty.* You do, my lord——then I declare it was

a design, one or other—the best carried on that ever I knew in my life; and (to my shame own it) for aught I know, the only thing that could have prevailed upon my temper; 'twas a foolish pride that has cost me many a bitten lip to support it—I wish we don't both repent, my lord.

*L. Mor.* Don't you repent without me, and we never shall.

*Sir Cha.* Well, madam, now the worst that the world can say of your past conduct, is, that my lord had constancy, and you have tried it.

“*Enter a Servant to Lord MORELOVE.*”

“*Serv.* My lord, Mr. le Fevre's below, and desires to know what time your lordship will please to have the music begin.”

“*L. Mor.* Sir Charles, what say you? will you give me leave to bring them hither?”

“*Sir Cha.* As the ladies think fit, my lord.”

“*L. Betty.* O! by all means, 'twill be better here, unless we could have the Terrace to ourselves.”

“*L. Mor.* Then, pray desire them to come hither immediately.”

“*Serv.* Yes, my lord.”

[*Exit Serv.*]

“*Enter Lady GRAVEAIRS.*”

“*Sir Cha.* Lady Graveairs!

“*L. Gra.* Yes!—you may well start! but don't suppose I am now come, like a poor tame fool, to

“upbraid your guilt; but, if I could, to blast you  
“with a look.

“*Sir Cha.* Come, come, you have sense,—don’t  
“expose yourself—you are unhappy, and I own my-  
“self the cause,—the only satisfaction I can offer  
“you, is to protest no new engagement takes me  
“from you; but a sincere reflection of the long neg-  
“lect, and injuries I have done the best of wives;  
“for whose amends and only sake I now must part  
“with you, and all the inconvenient pleasures of my  
“life.

“*L. Gra.* Have you then fallen into the low con-  
“tempt of exposing me, and to your wife too?

“*Sir Cha.* ’Twas impossible; without it, I could  
“never be sincere in my conversion.

“*L. Gra.* Despicable!

“*Sir Cha.* Do not think so—for my sake I know  
“she’ll not reproach you—nor by her carriage ever  
“let the world perceive you have wronged her.—

“My dear——

“*L. Easy.* Lady Graveairs, I hope you’ll sup  
“with us.

“*L. Gra.* I cannot refuse so much good company,  
“madam.

“*Sir Cha.* You see the worst of her resentment—  
“In the mean time, don’t endeavour to be her friend,  
“and she’ll never be your enemy.

“*L. Gra.* I am unfortunate—’tis what my folly  
“has deserved, and I submit to it.

" *L. Mor.* Sol here is the music.

" *L. Easy.* Come, ladies, shall we sit ?

" S O N G.

" *Sabina, with an angel's face,*

" *By love ordain'd for joy,*

" *Seems of the Siren's cruel race,*

" *To charm and then destroy.*

" *With all the arts of look and dress,*

" *She fans the fatal fire;*

" *Through pride, mistaken oft for grace,*

" *She bids the swains expire.*

" *The god of love enrag'd to see*

" *The nymph defy his flame,*

" *Pronounc'd his merciless decree*

" *Against the haughty dame.*

" *Let age with double speed o'ertake her,*

" *Let love the room of pride supply;*

" *And when the lovers all forsake her,*

" *A spotless virgin let her die."*

*Sir CHARLES comes forward with Lady EASY.*

*Sir Cha.* Now, my dear, I find my happiness grow fast upon me ; in all my past experience of the sex, I found, even among the better sort, so much of folly, pride, malice, passion, and irresolute desire, that I concluded thee but of the foremost rank, and,



therefore, scarce worthy my concern; but thou hast stirred me with so severe a proof of thy exalted virtue, it gives me wonder equal to my love——If then the unkindly thought of what I have been, hereafter shall intrude upon thy growing quiet, let this reflection teach thee to be easy:

*Thy wrongs, when greatest, most thy virtue prov'd;  
And, from that virtue found, I blush'd and truly lov'd.*

[Exeunt omnes.]

